

Blessing for an Engaged Couple

*Lord God,
the source of all love,
the wise plan of your providence,
has brought this woman and man together.*

*As they prepare themselves
for the sacrament of marriage
and pray for your grace,
grant that,
strengthened by your blessing,
they may grow in their respect for one another
and cherish each other with a sincere love.*

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Saint Blase Catholic Church

Wedding Information

CONGRATULATIONS on your engagement! This is a wonderful moment in your lives and we at Saint Blase are delighted to share in your love.

This is a special time for you and for us as a community of faith. As the Church, we are happy for you and are committed to assist you as you prepare for the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony. We believe that this is a time when God's grace is present and active in a unique manner, as you experience the love of God in your love for each other. May God continue to abundantly bless your love.



By your engagement, you have made a profound and personal commitment to one another. In the months ahead you will be very busy with all the details of the wedding ceremony and reception. Our concern is not just the ceremony, but that you be prepared well for the life-long commitment that is marriage. We consider marriage to be sacred and serious. It is our hope and our prayer that during these months your relationship will be deepened through the sharing together in a program of preparation for the Sacrament of Matrimony.

Marriage represents to the community the unbreakable bond of love that exists between Christ and the Church. Because of this, **marriage is a sacrament**. As a sacrament, it exists not only for the lives of you who will be joined together, but also for the entire community. We want your wedding liturgy to be holy, beautiful, and the beginning of a life-long marriage.

Because marriage is a sacrament in the Catholic Church, we have definite beliefs about this marriage that differ from those in our popular society. What you may have experienced in the popular media rarely expresses what the Church understands and believes about marriage. As you begin your preparation it is important that you reflect on these beliefs as a couple and with the church community.

***Please take some time together to reflect these beliefs of our Church.
These are teachings of our faith in which you will be married.***

We believe that marriage is more than just a legal agreement. It is a covenant. For us, marriage is a witness to, and a sign of, the relationship between Christ and the Church.

“Authentic human love is caught up into divine love.” *(Church in the Modern World, Vatican II # 48.2)*

How is your “marriage covenant” different from a “marriage contract”?

*In other words, how is your marriage in the church
different from one which may take place somewhere else?*

+

The unconditional love of spouses, permanence, the openness to children and their education, all found in a sacramental marriage, show us, in concrete ways, Christ’s love.

How is your love for each other like Christ’s love?

How will this love be lived out in your marriage?

“The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring...” *(Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1601, Code of Canon Law #1055,)*

We believe that marriage is based on the free, full consent of the persons. The wife and husband promise to be “true to one another . . . until death. . .” Therefore, marriage is about fidelity, consent and love, about creating a bond which only death can dissolve.

Why is it so important for you to give yourselves to each other freely and fully?

Are there issues that might stop this free giving?

All this comes directly from the first covenant we made, Baptism.

How is your marriage a living out of your baptism?



Marriage as a sacrament is a sign to the community.

Whose marriages have been signs to you? Why?

What sacrifices do you think you will be called on to make in your marriage?

"Let married people themselves . . . in the footsteps of Christ... bear witness by their faithful love in the joys and sacrifices of their calling, to that mystery of love which the Lord revealed to the world by his death and resurrec-



Your family is the most basic element of our Christian community. We call the family the "Domestic Church". It is here that you grow in God's love, here where your children will first learn to pray and to live as disciples of Jesus.

What needs to be part of your life together that you may continue to grow in grace?

Do you pray together? Worship on Sunday together? Live your faith together?

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Since marriage is a permanent commitment in the Church, it certainly cannot be taken lightly. Preparation for marriage has been happening since your birth and baptism. However, when a couple decides to marry in the Church, they must participate in sacramental preparation. Minimally, this takes place over six months.

Marriage Preparation

During your engagement, there will be many plans that you will have to make. The most important will be the time and effort you give to preparing yourselves to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage.

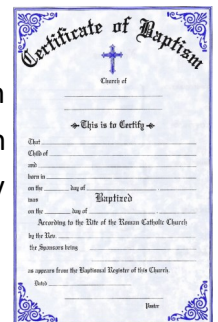
The first thing, of course, is to choose a wedding date. Since your wedding is part of our parish's liturgical life, please keep in mind the seasons of the liturgical year, as well as our annual events. **Weddings are not celebrated during the Sacred Triduum or the season of Lent, and are discouraged in Advent.**



As you choose a date, recall that each season of the Church year has a different color and various symbols. These are not removed or moved for a wedding. In order to look for, or place, a date on the calendar you must speak with our pastor. (No one else will be able to set a date for you.)

Initial Appointment. When you speak with the priest or deacon, make an appointment for your initial interview. *This begins the formal six months dedicated to your marriage preparation.* Take this time as a type of spiritual retreat. It is very easy to get caught up in the busyness of wedding plans. We encourage you to avoid the stress as much as possible, and concentrate on what this time is really about: your future life together. *(Magazines, TV shows and movies often will try to steer you into spending as much money as possible, and away from your spiritual and emotional growth as a couple.)*

Baptismal certificates: If either of you were not baptized at St. Blase, you will have to obtain **recently issued baptismal certificates** *(dated within the last six months)*. Just call the parish where you were baptized and ask them to send you a copy of your baptismal certificate. They will be happy to do so.



After your initial interview with the priest, **you will be asked to make arrangements to take a Pre-Marital Inventory (PMI).** This is a survey tool to help you understand your strengths and weaknesses as a couple. You will then meet with a professional counselor to discuss the outcome. There is a fee for this service. The priest will give you more information at your meeting.



You also will participate in a marriage preparation program. Our pastor will discuss the details of this at your initial meeting. Please return to the parish office the certificate of completion when you receive it.

Music/ Liturgy: Couples will meet with our Directors of Music, Susie & Dave Taylor, to select the music for their wedding. Anywhere between two to four months before your wedding, please contact them to plan the music for your wedding.



You will also meet with our Pastoral Associate, Dr. Mary Dumm, to go over the other liturgical aspects of the wedding. Please contact her as soon as possible after your initial meeting with Fr Randy.

Final appointment with the priest. Please call to arrange this meeting **six weeks prior** to your wedding day. At this time the details of the wedding liturgy will be finalized.

Rehearsal: Your rehearsal date can be set up to three months before the wedding by contacting the parish office. A Wedding Coordinator will be assigned and they will conduct the rehearsal for you. If possible, please refrain from bringing young children to the rehearsal if they are not part of the wedding liturgy. In most cases, someone can pick them up from home and bring them to any gathering that may take place after the rehearsal. **Rehearsals are usually held on the Thursday prior to the wedding date at 5:30pm.**



Marriage license: The marriage license for the State of Michigan is only valid for 30 days. You may obtain it by contacting the County Clerk's office. Please turn the complete Marriage License (all copies) into the Parish Office at least **one week** before the wedding.



Cost: *The minimum donation requested to celebrate your wedding liturgy at St. Blase is \$700.00. **This MUST be received by the parish office ONE MONTH prior your wedding.***

A parish event: Please send a copy of your photo to the Parish Office, so it can be printed in our church bulletin, "The Flame," the week of your wedding. This affirms marriage as a parish event, allows for prayerful support from the parish community, and gives emphasis to the sacrament of marriage.

Reminders For Your Wedding Day

***Please share this information with whoever needs it!
(We do not wish to embarrass either your guests, photographers
or anyone else who may be present for the day. However, these guidelines will be enforced.)***

Chapel: Our Chapel, which includes the tabernacle, is to the left of the shrine of St. Blase. It is a place for prayer. Perhaps you would like to offer a final prayer here on the night of your rehearsal or on the day of the wedding.

Inform your photographers, etc, that it may NOT be used for dressing, gathering, picture taking, etc.



Photographers and videographers: It is important to remember that this is a church and not a photo studio. It is a sacred space and should be treated as such. Photographers and videographers are permitted during the wedding liturgy with the following understandings:

***Respect for the dignity of the religious service must be observed.** For this reason photographers or video cameras **are not permitted in the sanctuary during the liturgy.** The sanctuary is the area of the altar, platform and steps. They **MUST** stay behind the last row of guests on either side of the main aisle. NO ONE is allowed anywhere else in the Church.

- * NOTHING is to be placed on the Baptismal font.
- *Flash may be used ONLY during the entrance and recessional processions.
- * Cameras may NOT be placed in front of the first rows of any of the 5 sections in the church, nor can they block any of the aisles.
- *Very limited time is available before the liturgy for photos. These photos should be taken at home. Please check with Mary Dumm the week prior to your wedding for Church availability.
- *Immediately following the wedding liturgy, the photographer will have 30 minutes for pictures.
- *Following the liturgy the sanctuary steps may be used for pictures; however the altar itself or the sanctuary furnishings are not to be used or moved.
- *Videographers are expected to abide by the same policies as still photographers.

Runner: For safety and insurance concerns, runners are not permitted at St. Blase.

Flowers: If you decide to have flowers, the selection and ordering is done by you. You may have two arrangements. These are usually placed in front of the altar and the ambo (place from which the readings are proclaimed). Any vases are to be provided by the florist. Please keep in mind the regular décor of the church. *(Recall that each season of the Church year has a different color and various symbols. **These are not removed or moved for a wedding.**)*



Following the ceremony you may either leave the flowers, which will be placed in the chapel, or take them to the reception. Bows may be placed on the chairs **ONLY** if they are tied or pinned. Please do not use tape or wire since it mars the wood. Other items that are **NOT PERMITTED** include, but are not limited to, floral arches, candelabra, candle stands along the main aisle, rose or other flower petals.

Nothing, for example rose petals, may be “thrown” by an attendant during the procession.

Alcohol: The POSSESSION AND/OR DRINKING of alcoholic beverages in the church or on parish grounds before or after the wedding is **ABSOLUTELY FORBIDDEN. THE WEDDING MAY BE POSTPONED** if alcohol or illegal drugs are discovered in the church or on parish grounds prior to the liturgy. *This includes any member of the wedding party.*

Unity Candle/ Flowers to Mary: The lightening of a unity candle, while a beautiful custom is not part of the Catholic Rite of Marriage. Following vows and the exchange of rings, it creates a duplicity of unity symbols.

Taking flowers to a statue of Mary is also not part of the Catholic Rite of Marriage. It is drawn from a pagan fertility custom. While we discourage these practices, we will not refuse couples that wish include them. However, we ask them to prayerfully consider these concerns and encourage couples reflect on their own spiritual life. Perhaps it would be wise to include flowers to Mary as part of the prayer at your rehearsal or consider using the candle ritual at the reception as part of the prayer prior to dining.

These may be discussed in your meetings prior to the wedding liturgy.

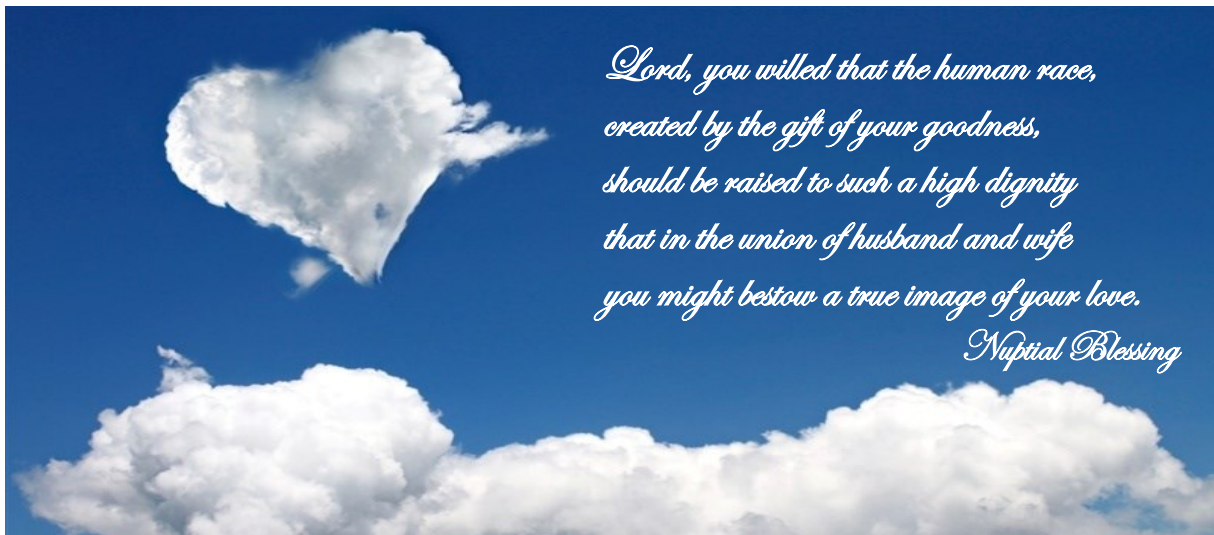
Worship Aid/ Wedding Program: It is not necessary to provide a program for your wedding liturgy. If you wish to do so, please note that music may **NOT** be reproduced without justly paying for a copyright license. All songs are already found in the parish hymnals. Perhaps you may simply wish to provide your guests with a listing of the bridal party and /or a note from you. If you do wish to create a worship aid, please contact Mary Dumm and she will be happy to assist you with the appropriate format and licensing fees.

After the Liturgy

Wedding Photo: Everyone loves a wedding. Many parishioners will not be able to be at your liturgy. We ask couples to provide us with a photo to be printed in our church paper, "The Flame." Your wedding is a part of our lives as a faith community, and you will be prayed for and supported by the entire parish. Please email it to sarah.richard@stblase.org

Clean up: Please choose someone who will make sure you take with you all of your belongings and help us keep the Church ready for worship. Flower boxes, water bottles etc. should simply be placed in or near one of the many waste baskets.

Rice, birdseed, and confetti, etc.: Please ask your guests not to throw rice, which is food; birdseed, which can be very dangerous; or confetti, which creates a maintenance problem. In addition, these customs, and others, such as releasing balloons, have no symbolic significance in the Christian tradition.



Preparing your Wedding Liturgy

For many couples this is the exciting part of marriage preparation! As you begin your planning, please keep a few principles in mind.

This is a celebration! You are planning a prayerful, joyful liturgical service. Your friends and family are not mere spectators, coming to watch you get married. They are all part of the celebration. Music is for singing, not just listening. *(Think about how boring the reception will be if no one speaks to each other, avoids eating and drinking and, presuming you have music, not one person dances.)*

Think about your marriage liturgy as if it were a Sunday Mass. That is basically how it flows. Your exchange of consent, vows and rings takes place after the homily.

While this will be your only wedding, we at the parish prepare for many weddings every year. *Trust us.*

Again, be careful what florists, photographers, videographers and others you hire for the day, may suggest. Different churches and other weddings sites all have various rules. Read this booklet carefully, and if you still have questions on what is allowed, please contact the parish office.

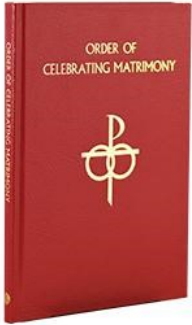
Let's plan the wedding liturgy!

"Short-term preparations for marriage tend to be concentrated on invitations, clothes, the party and any number of other details that tend to drain not only the budget but energy and joy as well. The spouses come to the wedding ceremony exhausted and harried, rather than focused and ready for the great step that they are about to take.

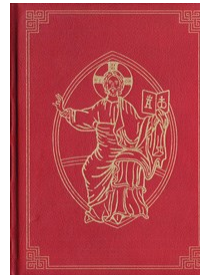
Here let me say a word to fiancés. Have the courage to be different. Don't let yourselves get swallowed up by a society of consumption and empty appearances. What is important is the love you share, strengthened and sanctified by grace." Pope Francis. Joy of Love # 212



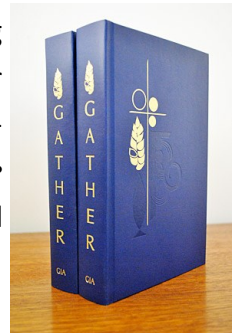
General Norms



Prayers: All the prayers of the liturgy are taken from the Church's official books.



Music: In general, think of your favorite Church songs. What psalm do you like best? During what season of the Church year will the wedding take place? What songs do you think your guests can sing well? (There are some common hymn tunes with special verses just for weddings.) Since this is one of the Church's liturgies, *only authorized liturgical music may be used* during the wedding liturgy (i.e. no pre-recorded music, radio, ipod or streaming). All music options will be discussed with the Director of Music at your meeting with him.



Gathering Rites

Greeting and Seating of Guests: It is always proper to greet guests. The Catholic Church's Provincial Guidelines suggest that the bride and groom take the lead in welcoming friends and relatives along with the attendants. It is also encouraged that members of the wedding party welcome guests to sit anywhere in the church. We are celebrating unity, therefore it seems strange to divide the church into the "bride's side" and the "groom's side."

Entrance Procession and Gathering Song:

“The *Rite of Marriage*” envisions a very different entrance procession than the one to which most are accustomed. It has the priest, ministers carrying the cross, candles and lectionary going to the door of the church where they would welcome the couple and lead them to their place at the altar. It also recommends that the parents of the bride and groom would accompany their daughter or son in the procession. Attendants would follow.



The customary procession loses much of its attractiveness when its original purpose is known, namely, one man handing over a woman to another man. It dates to a time when women were considered as property; it was indeed a father giving away his daughter.” (The Catholic Bishops of Michigan *Provincial Guidelines for Marriage Preparation*, 4)

Other options for the procession signify other meanings. For example, the uniting of two families, honoring both parents or when the couple then walks down the aisle together indicating they have been called by God to choose each other.

We offer couples the following options for the Entrance Procession:

A.

Cross

Lector with Gospel Book

Priest (Presider)

Attendants

Groom With Parent(s)

Bride With Parent(s)

B.

Cross

Lector with Gospel Book

Priest (Presider)

Groom With Parent(s)

Attendants

Bride With Parent(s)

C.

Cross

Lector with Gospel Book

Priest (Presider) & Groom

Attendants

Bride With Parent(s)

We recognize that every family is different and may have unique concerns. The procession will be discussed when you meet with Mary Dumm, our Pastoral Associate.

“In their preparation for marriage, the couple should be encouraged to make the liturgical celebration a profound personal experience and to appreciate the meaning of each of its signs.” Pope Francis. Joy of Love # 213

Liturgy of the Word

Readings: What are your favorite Scripture passages? The Church has a number of suggested readings for this sacrament. *These are found in the appendix of this book.* As on Sunday,

the First Reading is from the Old Testament
we sing together a Psalm
the second reading is from the Epistles
we stand and sing the Gospel Acclamation (alleluia)
the priest or deacon proclaims the Gospel.



Please choose readings from the appendix. You can discuss these with the priest at your final appointment.

If you have friends or relatives who are lectors, please feel free to invite them to proclaim the Word of God at your wedding. If not, the parish will provide a lector. *(This is not simply another slot to fill with someone. The Sacred Scriptures are God's Holy Word. Persons unaccustomed to this ministry often find themselves put in an awkward situation. It is this person who will carry the Book of the Gospels in the Entrance Procession.)*

Sacrament of Marriage

Your consent and vows are exchanged after the homily. Please take time in these next months to reflect on these promises.

Memorize the vows. At the wedding you will join hands and make these promises to each other. *There are two copies of these vows in the appendix from which you can practice.*

Priest or Deacon:

N. & N. Have you come to enter into Marriage without coercion, freely and wholeheartedly?

Bride and Groom say: I have.

Are you prepared, as you follow the path of Marriage, to love and honor each other for as long as you both shall live?

Bride and Groom say: I am.

Are you prepared to accept children lovingly from God and to bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?

Bride and Groom say: I am.

Priest or deacon:

Since it is your intention to enter the covenant of Holy Matrimony,
join your right hands and declare your consent before God and his Church.

Then they say to each other: (MEMORIZE THESE)

I, (Groom's name), take you (Bride's name), to be my wife.

I promise to be faithful to you,

In good times and in bad,

in sickness and in health,

to love you and to honor you all the days of my life.

I, (Bride's name), take you (Groom's name), to be my husband.

I promise to be faithful to you,

in good times and in bad,

in sickness and in health,

to love you and to honor you all the days of my life.

Priest or deacon: (In these or similar words:)

May the Lord in his kindness strengthen the consent
you have declared before the Church,
and graciously bring to fulfillment his blessing within you.
What God joins together, let no one put asunder.

*Now the bride and groom exchange the rings.
In our culture, this is a very visible sign of the marriage.*

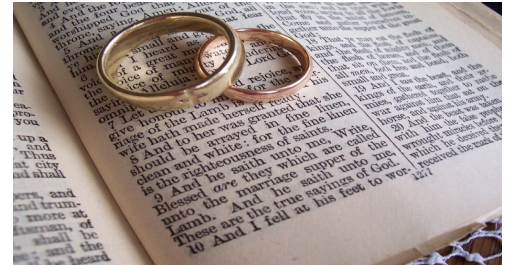
Priest or deacon:

May the Lord bless + these rings
which you will give to each other
as the sign of love and fidelity. Amen.

They say to each other:

(Bride's name) Receive this ring
as a sign of my love and fidelity.

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.



(Groom's name) Receive this ring
as a sign of my love and fidelity.

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

The Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful) follows the exchange of rings. As with the readings, these may be read by a guest who is a lector, or an assigned lector from our parish. It is most appropriate that you, the couple, write these intercessions. What do you wish to pray for on your wedding day? There should be one for the Church, one for the world, and one for those in need. You should have about five to seven petitions. Bring these to your final meeting with the priest. *There are samples in the appendix.*

Liturgy of the Eucharist:

Communion will be as usual, both the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. We ask that your guests observe the teachings of the church as prescribed by our Bishops:

Guidelines for the Reception of Communion

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For Catholics

As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion. We are encouraged to receive Communion devoutly and frequently. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should not be conscious of grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord without prior sacramental confession except for a grave reason where there is no opportunity for confession. In this case, the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make a perfect act of contrition, including the intention of confession as soon as possible (Code of Canon Law, canon 916). A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance is encouraged for all.

For Fellow Christians

We welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Eucharist as our brothers and sisters. We pray that our common baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in this Eucharist will draw us closer to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions that separate us. We pray that these will lessen and finally disappear, in keeping with Christ's prayer for us "that they may all be one." (John 17:21)

Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Holy Communion. Eucharistic sharing in exceptional circumstances by other Christians requires permission according to the directives of the diocesan bishop and the provisions of canon law (canon 844 § 4). Members of the Orthodox Churches, the Assyrian Church and the Polish National Catholic Church, are urged to respect the discipline of their own churches. According to Roman Catholic discipline, the Code of Canon Law does not object to the reception of Communion by Christians of these churches (canon 844 § 3).

For Those Not Receiving Holy Communion

All who are not receiving Holy Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.

For Non-Christians

We also welcome to this celebration those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. While we cannot admit them to holy Communion, we ask them to offer their prayers for the peace and unity of the human family.

Dismissal Rites

Closing Recession and Song: As with the procession, we sing a hymn at this moment, as on Sunday. However instrumental music may be used.

