



The following policies and guidelines apply to all weddings celebrated at Saint Boniface Catholic Church. They are based on the experience of over 120 years of weddings that have been celebrated in this historic church. The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that your wedding will be a beautiful and prayerful occasion. When reserving the church, both the bride and groom must affirm that they have read these guidelines and agree to abide by them. Please read this document carefully and completely. At the end you will find a few reminders to help keep things in perspective when the stress of planning feels overwhelming.

*“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:31-32)*



**Saint Boniface Catholic Church**

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[www.StBonifaceParish.com](http://www.StBonifaceParish.com)



## **A Few Important Things Up Front**

### **A Catholic Wedding**

By choosing to have your wedding at Saint Boniface, you are expressing your desire to begin your married life in an act of Christian worship celebrated before God and the community according to the rites of the Catholic Church. Not just a beautiful building, Saint Boniface is first and foremost a house of prayer dedicated to the glory of God. All weddings will take place in accordance with the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, the liturgical book which governs all Catholic weddings. The priest or deacon responsible for your marriage preparation should ensure that you are familiar with the wedding liturgy. If you have any questions about what may or may not take place within the wedding ceremony, please ask – do not assume! All decisions regarding the wedding liturgy are at the discretion of the St. Boniface staff and the presiding priest or deacon. A wedding/reception date does not dictate the marriage preparation process.

### **Catholic Marriage Requirements**

A Catholic wedding is a sacred bond entered for life between a man (groom) and a woman (bride). For the marriage to be a sacrament, both must be validly baptized. It requires fidelity, permanence, and openness to children – these are the marriage vows. Marriage is also not automatic in the Catholic Church – some people have impediments (obstacles) to marriage, some of which can be rectified – others cannot. The initial meeting between the couple and clergy should reveal any impediments, which are noted on the M-A Form. The bride and groom must be found free to marry in the Catholic Church before the wedding date is finalized. If they are not allowed to marry, then the wedding is canceled. So, the initial wedding date given to reserve the Church is only tentative – until the couple has been approved for marriage.

### **Annulments & Validations**

For those with prior marriages (whose spouses are still alive) an official annulment (declaration that a valid marriage did not occur) is necessary. An annulment is sought by petition, but it is not automatic – some annulments are not granted. Also, the time required to complete an annulment varies greatly. So, if an annulment is required, it should be granted before setting a wedding date, since it may not be granted at all or not be granted in time for the wedding. All marriage declarations: annulment (nullity decree), lack of canonical form, sanation, validation of civil marriage, dispensations, permissions, etc. – must be noted on the M-A Form. Validations of civil marriages that require new consent occur during the marriage rite. The term “validation” describes the process of making a civil union (“marriage”) into a valid canonical marriage.



### **The Catholic & The Wedding**

Catholics must marry in the Catholic Church – according to canonical form (unless officially dispensed by the bishop); otherwise, the marriage is invalid – nothing occurs. The couple leaves just as they arrived. The Catholic Church has the authority to dictate how Catholics marry, which requires marrying according to canonical form. Also, Catholics must be fully initiated in the Catholic Church – meaning, having received the three sacraments of initiation: baptism, first communion, and confirmation. For any wedding in the Catholic Church, one must be Catholic. Two non-Catholics cannot marry in the Catholic Church. A Wedding Mass is not required for Catholics. The Wedding Mass is usually restricted to two Catholics. If only one is Catholic, then the wedding only contains the marriage rite – not a Mass (unless permission is received). Permission is also needed for a Catholic to marry a baptized non-Catholic, and a dispensation is required for a Catholic to marry an unbaptized person (a natural marriage).

### **Marriage Preparation**

Marriage preparation begins with the initial meeting between the couple and the clergy, which initiates the marriage paperwork – the M-A & M-B Forms, sacrament certificates, marriage preparation course certificates or proofs of attendance, and if applicable, birth or death certificates, any canonical rulings such as annulments, lack of forms, sanations, validations, dispensations, permissions, etc. This meeting occurs before the couple submits the online wedding registration form and deposit – at least 6 months before the wedding date. This allows the clergy time to access the couple's freedom to marry. If allowed to marry, the couple begins diocesan/parish preparation courses over the next few months – such as a couple compatibility inventory course, a marriage encounter course, and a natural family planning course for understanding and using moral methods open to children. Some courses are available online. This process assumes the couple is connected to the parish of their wedding presider – the priest or deacon responsible for the couple's preparation. He may be assisted by clergy at his parish. Saint Boniface is only the wedding location – it does not provide marriage preparation or the presider for the wedding. Saint Boniface only prepares and marries its own parishioners.

### **Scheduling**

Saturday is the most popular day for weddings and also the day most easily accommodated. Saturday weddings typically start between 2:00 and 5:00 PM. It may be possible to celebrate the wedding on a Friday. No Sunday weddings are permitted. The wedding day and time must be coordinated with the parish, along with the presider. Wedding dates are tentative until the couple is deemed free to marry by the presider, and the registration form and deposit are received – at least 6 months in advance. Any exceptions must be approved by the Saint Boniface staff.

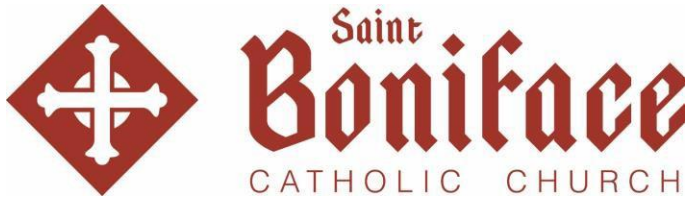


## **Fees**

In order to reserve Saint Boniface Church for a wedding date three things must occur: 1) a definite confirmation (not a possibility, an unknown, or a maybe) by the wedding presider (priest or deacon) that he will prepare the couple for marriage and preside at the wedding. 2) the online wedding registration form (which confirms #1 above) must be received. 3) the initial deposit of \$980.50 must be received. These three things must occur at least 6 months before the date. The initial deposit will not be accepted, and the Church will not be reserved, if the wedding registration form does not confirm a wedding presider. The second payment of \$980.50 is due at least 1 month before the wedding date. The entire wedding file (all the paperwork) must be received from the wedding presider at least 1 month before the wedding date. The wedding will not occur without prior reception of the entire wedding file. The total wedding cost is \$1,961. Special consideration will be made for parishioners of Saint Boniface. If for some reason you must cancel, the deposit of \$980.50 will be refunded only if it is more than 3 months before the wedding date. The \$1,961 fee includes compensation for the wedding assistant, organist, and cantor, along with the Church reservation. A gift for the presider is welcome for his time and travel but not expected.

## **Timeline of Obligations Before the Wedding**

- 1) At least 6 months (preferably more) before the wedding date: contact Saint Boniface parish office to reserve the wedding date on the Church calendar. Submit the online wedding registration form (must confirm a wedding presider) with the \$980.50 initial deposit. A prior confirmation by the presider for both preparation and wedding must occur. The deposit only reserves the date – it does not guarantee the wedding. Clergy determine freedom to marry.
- 2) At least 5 months (preferably more) before the wedding date: begin a parish/diocese marriage preparation program: marriage instruction and courses over the next few months. Submit all marriage forms/certificates to your wedding presider for your marriage file.
- 3) At least 1 month (preferably more) before the wedding date: submit the second payment of \$980.50. The wedding presider must send the entire marriage file to Saint Boniface at least 1 month before the wedding date for the wedding to occur. He must also receive permission to preside from the pastor of Saint Boniface. If he is outside the Archdiocese of Louisville, he must submit his letter of suitability (good standing) to the Chancery of the Archdiocese.
- 4) Within 30 days before the wedding date: the couple is responsible for obtaining their marriage license from the county clerk's office and bring it to the wedding rehearsal.
- 5) Day before the wedding: arrive at the parish with the wedding presider, the wedding party, and the marriage license for the wedding rehearsal.
- 6) Day of the wedding: arrive before the time of your wedding and be married! The best man and maid of honor must sign the marriage license as witnesses right after the wedding.



*Set me as a seal upon your heart. (Song of Songs 8:6a)*

## **Who's Who In Your Wedding**

### **Bride and Groom**

The two most important people at the wedding are the ones getting married – the man (groom) and woman (bride). One of them must be a fully-initiated Catholic – meaning, received the sacraments of initiation: baptism, first communion, and confirmation. Both must be free of any canonical impediments (obstacles) to marriage, which are noted on the M-A Form. Both must be validly baptized for the marriage to be a sacrament. Both must be Catholic to have a Wedding Mass (unless permission is obtained). If only one is Catholic, the wedding is the marriage rite. Catholics are expected to be practicing the faith, and all couples are expected to be living a moral life – as marriage in the Church entails a bond with God as well as the spouse.

### **Presiding Priest or Deacon**

The presider for your wedding must be a Catholic priest or deacon in good standing and must be qualified in accordance with civil and church law. All clergy must receive permission to preside from the pastor of Saint Boniface. Clergy from outside the Archdiocese of Louisville require a letter of suitability (good standing) from their diocesan chancery to the chancery of the Archdiocese of Louisville, as well as submit their couple's entire marriage file from their marriage tribunal to the marriage tribunal of the Archdiocese of Louisville. Clergy within the Archdiocese of Louisville must submit their couple's entire marriage file to Saint Boniface at least 1 month before the wedding date. The wedding presider must be at the parish where the couple is prepared for marriage. Saint Boniface only prepares and marries its own parishioners.

Before filling out the online wedding registration form and submitting the initial deposit, the couple must have met with the priest or deacon and confirmed his responsibility for their marriage preparation and his presiding at their wedding. This must occur at least 6 months before the wedding date. The wedding registration form requires the presider's commitment. The presider is responsible for assisting the couple in completing a suitable marriage preparation program and for ensuring that nothing prevents the couple from marrying according to the norms of the Catholic Church. If for some reason, the presider cannot celebrate the wedding, it is his responsibility to find a suitable priest or deacon to preside. The presider is expected to be present at the wedding rehearsal. The presider is also expected to abide by these wedding guidelines and to celebrate the liturgy in accordance with the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* and (if there is a Mass) the third edition of the *Roman Missal*.



## Witnesses

The two witnesses of a marriage are the best man and the maid of honor, who officially witness to the bride and groom exchanging consent during the marriage rite. This man and woman have their names recorded on the civil marriage certificate and in the parish records. They may be accompanied by additional groomsmen and bridesmaids – the number of each is up to you.

## Other Liturgical Roles

In addition to the bride and groom, presiding priest or deacon, and official witnesses, a number of other people may be involved in the celebration of the wedding liturgy. If possible, it is recommended that you choose people who already have experience in these roles.

- **Lectors:** Lectors proclaim the readings from Sacred Scripture as well as the petitions during the General Intercessions. You may choose up to three people to serve in this role: one for the first reading (usually from the Old Testament), one for the second reading (from the New Testament), and one for the petitions. Note that the Gospel is always proclaimed by a deacon or priest. All lectors should receive a copy of their assigned text in advance and practice reading their text aloud before the rehearsal.
- **Servers:** Altar servers assist the presider in the sanctuary during the course of the liturgy. One or two altar servers are encouraged, especially for a Mass. Those chosen should have some previous experience of serving at Mass.
- **Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion:** If Holy Communion will be distributed at your wedding, you may invite two or three people (depending on the number of guests you expect to receive Holy Communion) to assist the priest with the distribution of Holy Communion. All individuals serving in this role must have a current mandate to do so from their local bishop.
- **Ushers:** At your discretion, you may ask a few people to assist with handing out programs, seating guests, or other duties.
- **Flower girl and ring bearer:** Children must be at least five years old to walk in the procession or stand with the bridal party. Younger children may be led up the aisle by an older child or adult.
- No animals or signs may be in the procession or in the Church.

## Guests

Your guests have an important role to play as well. More than mere spectators, they are there to join you in prayer and worship, to witness your exchange of vows, and to celebrate with you. They do not need to duplicate the job of anyone you have hired to photograph or video your wedding. Please encourage your wedding guests to support you through their reverent attention and active participation in the liturgy.



### **Saint Boniface Staff**

- The parish office manager will be your primary contact person regarding scheduling, fees, and paperwork. She can answer any questions you have about the process and help you to get in touch with anyone you are unable to contact directly.
- The parish wedding coordinator will help you select the Scripture readings and plan other details of the wedding liturgy. A wedding assistant will supervise the rehearsal and the wedding itself to make sure that the needs of you, your family, friends, and guests are accommodated and the wedding proceeds in an organized and prayerful manner.
- The organist and director of music will play the organ for your wedding and will be your contact person when it comes to all music for the wedding. He will work with you to select music and can help you to arrange additional musicians if you desire.
- The pastor is available regarding any spiritual needs as you prepare for your wedding, especially if the bride and groom want to receive the sacrament of confession before their wedding. The pastor has authority over all activities occurring on Saint Boniface property and will make the final decision in any dispute.

*Let marriage be honored among all. (Hebrews 13:4a)*

## **Important Practicalities**

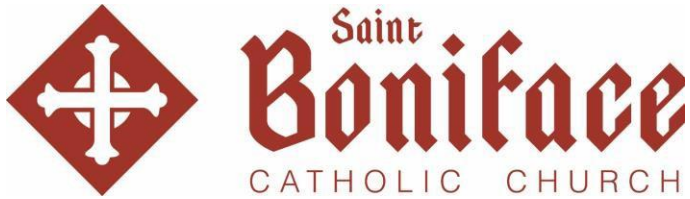
### **Music**

Because your wedding will take place in a church in the context of the sacred liturgy, all music for the wedding must be sacred – that is, oriented to the worship of God. Secular love songs, old family favorites, and popular celebratory tunes are not appropriate for the wedding liturgy – but they would be perfect at the reception!

The parish organist and director of music will assist you in selecting music and will play the organ for your wedding. He will also arrange for a cantor to sing at your wedding. If you wish to have other musicians perform at your wedding, he can work with you to arrange for them.

### **Rehearsal**

The rehearsal usually takes place the evening before the wedding and usually lasts about an hour. All members of the wedding party, lectors, servers, and anyone else with a role in the liturgy are expected to attend the rehearsal.



### **Marriage Paperwork**

All paperwork stays in the marriage file with the presider, who must submit the entire file to Saint Boniface at least 1 month before the wedding date. The couple sends their forms to the presider. The M-A & M-B Forms are required for both bride and groom by the Archdiocese of Louisville. For Catholics, proof of reception of the three sacraments of initiation is required. Usually, this is done by submitting a recent baptism certificate, which notates first communion and confirmation on the back – or at least confirmation. If confirmation is not noted on the back, then a separate confirmation certificate is required. If confirmation is verified, then first communion is also. If a baptism certificate cannot be attained (for those baptized), then written eyewitness or personal testimony is required. The marriage file includes all preparation forms: including M-A & M-B Forms, recent baptism certificates with notations, any annulments, sanations, lack of forms, validations, dispensations, and permissions, plus any marriage preparation course certificates.

Finally, it is the couple's responsibility to receive a marriage license from the county clerk's office within 30 days of the wedding, which they will bring to the rehearsal – the day before the wedding. The marriage license will be completed and signed by the presiding priest or deacon immediately following the wedding. All paperwork is to be left in the sacristy. The parish office staff will ensure that the license is mailed on the next business day.

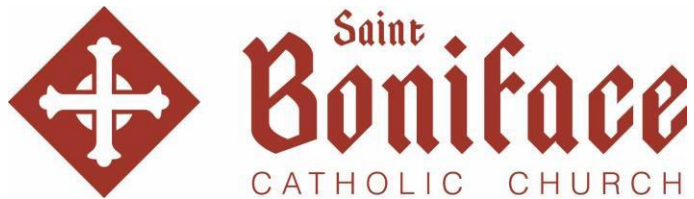
### **The Wedding Day**

Saint Boniface does not have a dressing area, so the wedding party should arrive at Saint Boniface already dressed. The bride and bridesmaids may wait in the tower room at the back of the church; the groom and groomsmen may wait in the sacristy at the front of the church (accessible through the sanctuary).

The following are prohibited anywhere inside the church or on church property (this includes both the Rehearsal and Wedding Day):

- Food and snacks
- Smoking (including e-cigarettes and vaping)
- Alcoholic beverages (see below)
- Illegal drugs or other substances
- **IMPORTANT:** On the wedding day, neither the bride, the groom, nor any member of the wedding party may consume alcohol (or any other mind-altering substance) prior to the wedding. The members of the wedding party must be sober for the wedding to take place. **VIOLATIONS MAY RESULT IN THE CANCELLATION OF THE WEDDING.**
- **DO NOT** make any interior or exterior adjustments to the church without written approval, which includes moving furniture and unlocking/locking of doors. Cost of repairs will be your responsibility.





A few other details:

- The church parking lot is unable to accommodate buses or limousines. These vehicles must be parked on the street. The wedding assistant can ensure that space in front of the church is reserved for these vehicles.
- Weddings need to start on time. The seating of the grandparents should take place a few minutes before the scheduled time of the wedding.
- As in all Catholic liturgies, the assembly is asked to stand at the opening procession.
- Receiving lines are not practical following a wedding at Saint Boniface. At the end of the ceremony the wedding party will proceed immediately out the front doors of the church, come around the side, and reenter the church for group pictures.

### **Flowers and Decorations**

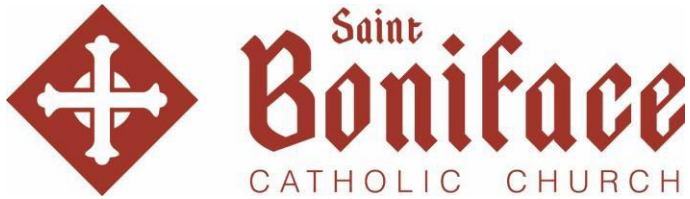
Florists and others involved in decorating the church should contact the Saint Boniface office to schedule a time to enter the church. All decorations must conform to the following guidelines:

- Sanctuary furnishings (altar, ambo, candlestands, presider chair, etc.) are not moved.
- Decorations in the sanctuary may be removed or changed only by Saint Boniface staff.
- The assembly's view of the altar, ambo, and presider's chair may not be obstructed.
- Due to the danger of slipping on the hardwood floors, aisle runners are not permitted.
- Bows or other decorations placed on the pews must be tied, not taped.
- Rice, confetti, birdseed, etc. may not be thrown either inside or outside the church.
- All decorations must be removed before leaving the church. Please be considerate of the parishioners and staff of Saint Boniface by leaving the church in the same condition in which you found it.

### **Photographers and Videographers**

Photographers and videographers must contact the Saint Boniface staff prior to the wedding. All persons serving in these roles are expected to conduct themselves with integrity, respect, and professionalism. They should comply with all instructions given by Saint Boniface staff and the presider as well as the following guidelines:

- Flash photography is permitted only during the entrance and exit processions.
- During the liturgy, photos may be taken from behind the congregation or from the open areas beside the front section of pews.
- Only those with a liturgical role may enter the sanctuary during the wedding liturgy.
- All video recording must be discreet. Bulky recording equipment must be stationary.
- Group photos may be taken for up to 45 minutes following the wedding. All should be respectful when posing, mindful that they are in a sacred space.
- Please discourage your family and guests from taking photos or videos during the liturgy.



*This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. (John 15:12)*

### **Final Reminders**

Your wedding will last at most around an hour; your marriage will last the rest of your life. It is easy to be overwhelmed with the stress of planning a beautiful wedding, rehearsal dinner, reception, honeymoon, etc. Do not let those things distract you from what is most important: seeking God's grace as you prepare to form a lifelong covenant with your future spouse.

With that in mind, here are a few reminders to help you keep things in perspective:

- The cost of your wedding does not determine the strength of your marriage.
- Weddings are not a competitive sport.
- Your interior attitude matters much more than any external appearances. In five, ten, or fifty years, no one will remember the color of the centerpieces at your reception. They will remember the love and joy you shared as you entrusted your lives to each other.
- There are only two people getting married at your wedding: not your parents, not your future in-laws, not your friends, and not the photographer. While being charitable and hospitable to all your guests, make your wedding day one that you and your spouse will look back on with fondness, not regret.
- Don't forget to invite Jesus to your wedding (see John 2:1-11). Pray regularly with and for your future spouse. Attend Sunday Mass together. Choose the Scripture readings for your wedding prayerfully together. For Catholics, celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation (confession) in the days leading up to your wedding day.
- No wedding goes perfectly according to plan. That's OK: it's what gives you stories to tell on your anniversary.
- Take a deep breath. It will be OK. Really.

*Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)*