



Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate

Information for Couples Preparing for the Celebration Of Christian Marriage

Welcome and Congratulations

The Rector, Staff and Parishioners of the Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate welcome you, and extend our best wishes to you as you prepare to enter into the Sacrament of Matrimony. We hope and pray that this will be a blessed time for you and your families.

Please find here some information about the celebration of Christian Marriage at the Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate. As you may well imagine we receive a significant number of requests for weddings here, so the following guidelines are meant to assist you in your preparations. Any specific requests regarding your celebration should be addressed to the Rector of the Basilica or his delegate.

Who can be married at the Basilica?

A man and a woman, at least one of whom is a Catholic of the Latin Rite, may enter into Marriage as long as both the intended bride and groom are free from any prior bond of marriage, or any other canonical impediment to Christian marriage. This means that if either party has been married before, in either a civil or religious ceremony, no date can be set for a wedding until freedom to marry in the Church has been established by the appropriate ecclesiastical authority.

At least the bride or the groom, or one of their families, should be registered parishioners of the Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate. A “registered parishioner” is a Catholic who lives in the boundaries of the Basilica Parish, or who has been registered with our parish office for at least six months, and who contributes to the Basilica.

Catholics who are not registered parishioners are welcome to be married here with the permission and cooperation of their own Parish Priest.

A \$1,000.00 donation toward the maintenance of the Basilica of Our Lady will be required of those who do not regularly support us with their financial contributions. A tax receipt will be issued for this donation.

How do I arrange to be married at the Basilica of Our Lady?

Please read over all the information regarding the celebration of Christian Marriage. If you would like to proceed with a wedding here then please call our parish office (519-824-3951), and make an appointment to see one of the Clergy to begin preparations for Marriage. No date for a wedding will be set over the phone or by e-mail. Dates are only set after a personal meeting with one of the Clergy of the Basilica. It is wise not to finalize a date and time with your desired reception venue until you have secured your date here at the Basilica.

If you are from outside the Basilica of Our Lady Parish you will also have to contact your own Parish Priest for permission to marry here. If you are from outside the Diocese of Hamilton, then the necessary paperwork and marriage preparation must be done in your own parish and forwarded to the Basilica through the Diocese of Hamilton.

How soon should we begin preparations with the Basilica?

Couples who wish to marry at the Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate are advised to contact us at least a year in advance of their desired wedding date. This will allow us time to complete the various requirements of marriage preparation and documentation.

What preparation and documents do I need?

In addition to a couple of meetings with the Clergy who will be officiating at your wedding, all couples are required to take a Marriage Preparation Course approved by the Diocese of Hamilton. The Basilica Clergy will assist you in registering for a Marriage Preparation Course. All couples will also do an online program entitled “Prepare-Enrich”. This will be explained to you in person by the Clergy of the Basilica.

Baptismal Certificates are required of all baptized Christians. A Roman Catholic must provide a Baptismal Certificate issued in the last six months. Non-Catholic Christians may bring a photocopy of their original Baptismal Certificate.

All couples are required by Ontario law to obtain a Civil Marriage License from the Office of the registrar General at City Hall. This license can be obtained within 90 days of the wedding. We require you to bring your license to our Parish Office at least one week before your wedding date.

Wedding Times

Weddings at the Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate are ordinarily celebrated at 12:30pm and 2:30pm on Saturdays. Other days or times may be arranged directly with the Rector of the Basilica.

Music for Our Wedding

Music is an integral element of any liturgy in the Catholic Church. Please see the attached guidelines for music at the Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate. Basilica musicians lead music for ceremonies at the Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate. Please do not invite outside musicians without the express permission of the Rector and/or the Organist & Choirmaster.

Are There Fees Associated With Marrying at the Basilica?

Please see the attached page regarding fees that are associated with weddings at the Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate.

Decorating the Basilica

Couples may arrange for floral arrangements to be brought to the Basilica for their wedding. Flowers should be placed in such a way that they do not obstruct the view of your guests from the liturgical action in the Sanctuary. Pew bows or arrangements on the ends of the pews are permitted, but must be tied or clipped to the end of the pews, they may not be attached using any adhesive. Although it is not required, the Basilica community is grateful to any couple who choose to leave their flowers for the weekend liturgies.

Please note that aisle runners, arches, trellises, or anything blocking the ends of the pews are not permitted for security reasons. ***Throwing or scattering anything in the church or on church property is strictly prohibited. This includes rose petals (real or artificial), confetti, rice or anything else.***

If your wedding is at a festive time of the year, such as Christmas, Easter, or Thanksgiving, then please consult the Basilica clergy as extra flowers may be superfluous. If your wedding is during Lent then decorations must be kept to an absolute minimum, and removed immediately after the wedding ceremony.

Guest Clergy

Couples sometimes have friends or relatives who are priests or deacons, whom they would like to officiate, or take part in the wedding ceremony. Guest clergy are welcome at the discretion of the Rector. Please do not invite any other clergy to participate in your ceremony until you have spoken about this with the Rector of the Basilica. Any clergy from outside the Province of Ontario must obtain a license to officiate at a marriage in Ontario before they will be permitted to officiate at a wedding at the Basilica.

Photographers, Videographers and Wedding Planners

For the ceremony itself, regardless of how many photographers/videographers you may have hired for the day, couples may only have a maximum of two photographers, and one videographer, in the Basilica. Extra lighting is not permitted, although flash photography is permissible. The officiating clergy will not wear a microphone provided by videographers.

Photographers and Videographers must see the officiating clergy at least ten minutes before the beginning of the ceremony, and comply with our expectations.

Couples who engage the services of a wedding planner are reminded that the ceremony at the Basilica is governed by the Liturgical Law of the Roman Catholic Church, and the norms of the Diocese of Hamilton. Wedding Planners must consult the clergy before doing anything in the Basilica, and should know that they do not control the proceedings inside the Basilica. They are also asked to see the clergy ahead of time. It is helpful if they can be at the wedding rehearsal.

Rehearsal

A wedding rehearsal will be booked with the officiating clergy at a time that is convenient for the couple, their wedding party, and the Basilica staff.

It is our hope that these guidelines are helpful in preparing for your wedding ceremony. Should you have any questions or concerns, or to begin preparations to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage at the Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate, please contact the Parish Office at (519)824-3951.

May God bless you as you begin this beautiful journey together.

Fr. Ian Duffy, Rector.