

SAINT AGNES CATHEDRAL



WEDDING GUIDELINES

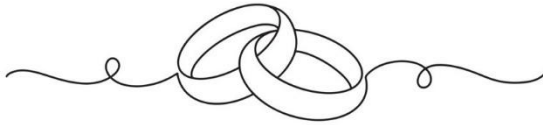
Dear Friends,

Congratulations! The Parish of Saint Agnes Cathedral rejoices in your plans to enter into Marriage. This booklet is designed to guide you in its proper celebration. We ask that you read through this booklet very carefully.

At Saint Agnes, we are here to help you in any way possible. Please feel free to inquire about any questions you may have.

May God bless you as you begin to plan your lives together.

*The Priests and Staff of
Saint Agnes Cathedral*



The Cathedral of Saint Agnes

Contact information:

The following may be contacted by leaving a message at the Parish/Rector Office. The office phone number is (516) 766-0205, email: “parishoffice@stagnescathedral.org.”

Very Rev. Michael F. Duffy

Rector

Rev. Christopher Heller

Associate Pastor

Rev. Michael Ngoka

Associate Pastor

Ms. Ellen Fox

Director of Wedding Rehearsals

Scheduling a Wedding at Saint Agnes

In order to help you prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage, we would like to make you aware of some Diocesan requirements and parish policies concerning your marriage at St. Agnes Cathedral.

To be married in a particular parish church, one party should be a registered member of the parish or currently live within the parish boundaries. If you reside outside of the parish boundaries and wish to register as a parishioner, *there is a waiting period of one year* before you can secure a wedding date. If neither Catholic party is registered at St. Agnes or lives within the parish boundaries, permission from the bride or groom's proper pastor must be obtained. Out of a desire to accommodate as many parishioners as possible, non-parishioners are able to secure a date only within a year of their wedding date.

To prepare properly for the sacrament, your marriage should be scheduled at least six months in advance of the celebration.

Usually the priest/deacon who first meets and interviews you will officiate at your wedding. Schedules change and priest transfers could make a difference in the policy. If you wish a specific priest from the parish to witness the wedding ceremony, you should indicate this at your first meeting. If you have a priest/deacon relative or friend whom you wish to perform the ceremony, he is most welcome to do so.

If the priest or deacon is not a priest of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, we ask that he have a letter from his diocese or religious community sent to the Rector of St. Agnes attesting to the fact that he is a priest/deacon in good standing. The priest/deacon must also contact the Rector requesting delegation.

Wedding Times

Friday

To be discussed with Priest/Deacon

Saturday

10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m.

Sunday

3:00 p.m.

Weddings are not scheduled on National Holidays: Independence Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, etc. A Nuptial Mass is ordinarily celebrated on Fridays or Saturdays.

On certain days of the Church calendar, it is not possible to celebrate a wedding, for example: Christmas, Epiphany, Ascension, Pentecost, Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Palm Sunday, Easter, All Souls' Day, and Holy Days of Obligation.

Documents Needed to Celebrate Marriage

Baptismal Certificates

A Baptismal Certificate is required for all Catholics. This document can be obtained from the church of your baptism. This updated Baptismal Certificate testifies to your freedom to marry. **The certificate must be a new original certificate, issued from the church of your baptism, within six months of the date of the Wedding.**

If one of the parties is a non-Catholic Christian, that person should bring a copy of his/her original Baptismal Certificate and obtain an affidavit signed by two witnesses (parent or close relative) that he/she has never been married before.

Freedom to Marry

Non-Catholics and non-parishioners must obtain an affidavit signed by two witnesses (parent or close relative) that he/she has never been married before. If either party has been previously married, then a copy of the Decree of Nullity must be presented before any preparations may be made. If a person has been previously married and their former spouse is deceased, a proof of death is required.

Inter-religious Marriage

If one of the parties to be married is not Catholic, a dispensation is required. The Catholic party must promise to do his/her best to maintain his/her faith and to share that faith with his/her children. The non-Catholic party must be aware of this commitment. When a marriage of mixed religion is celebrated, the Order of the Celebration of Matrimony without a Mass is to be used.

Letter of Permission

A Letter of Permission is required from the pastor of the geographic parish of *anyone who does not live within the parish boundaries of St. Agnes*. This should be presented to the consulting priest.

Marriage License

A valid New York State Marriage License is necessary. Any couple to be married in New York State must apply for a Marriage License in person and together with any Town Clerk in New York State. **A Marriage License is valid for sixty (60) days from the time it is issued.** Please remember that a 24-hour interval is required between the obtaining of the marriage license and the time for the marriage ceremony.

Marriage Preparation

The most important preparation for marriage is living a good Catholic spiritual life: attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, daily prayer, regular confession, and practicing the virtues, especially chastity. Marriage preparation is not limited to a single day; it is a process that allows you to explore the meaning and purpose of a Catholic marriage.

Pre-Cana and FOCCUS

It is a Diocese of Rockville Centre requirement for all couples to participate in pre-marital instruction known as “Pre-Cana”. PreCana programs in the Catholic Church explain what you need to know about the sacrament of marriage *before* the wedding. FOCCUS © Pre-Marriage Inventory is a self-assessment instrument designed to help couples learn more about themselves and determine their readiness for marriage. This assessment tool is used to help couples identify, discuss, and work through important relationship issues before they get married. It offers a map of specific topics that may need time and attention, along with offering a starting place for discussion for the engaged couple. The FOCCUS Pre-Marriage Inventory is a helpful resource for priests and deacons preparing couples for marriage. For more information visit “www.foccusinc.com”.

Please consult the “Marriage Preparation” form given to you at your initial meeting for approved Pre-Can options. To register for Pre Cana via the Diocese of Rockville Centre’s website, visit “DRVC.org”, and then click on the Marriage tab on their website. Scroll down to Diocesan Pre Cana Online Registration and complete the on-line form. Please choose the date you would like to attend from the dropdown list. **Once Pre-Cana has been completed, a copy of the certificate should be submitted to the parish/rectory office.**

It is best to complete this requirement as soon as possible, rather than wait until closer to the wedding date.

The priest assisting you with your marriage plans will explain each option to you and give you information to sign up for the various options.

Sacrament of Confession

In order to enter into the Sacrament of Marriage with the proper disposition, those to be married are to receive the Sacrament of Penance (Confession) shortly before their wedding. Please consult the parish bulletin for the current dates and times for confessions at St. Agnes. The Sacrament of Penance will not be available at the wedding rehearsal.

Church Offering/Fees

This offering will help cover the maintenance cost of our church building, the services of our parish organist and cantor and support the ministry of Saint Agnes.

Parish fees should be dropped off at the Rectory Office one month before the wedding. Please write out two separate checks.

If you are currently a parishioner of Saint Agnes or have some spiritual connection to the parish (i.e. received sacraments or attended school at Saint Agnes), the fees are:

\$700 to St. Agnes Cathedral

\$350 to St. Agnes Music Ministry

If you do not currently live in the parish boundaries and do not have a spiritual connection to the parish (i.e. attended Saint Agnes School or received one of your sacraments of initiation at Saint Agnes) but have received the necessary permission from your Pastor to marry at Saint Agnes, the fees are:

\$2,000 to St. Agnes Cathedral

\$350 to St. Agnes Music Ministry

Wedding Rehearsal

Because of the large numbers of weddings at St. Agnes and other pastoral commitments, it is usually not possible for the priest officiating at your wedding to conduct the wedding rehearsal. Rehearsals are conducted by our Wedding Rehearsal Coordinator. Please contact the Parish Office to schedule the rehearsal.

The usual evenings for the rehearsal are Thursday and Friday. Rehearsals take 30 minutes. They begin promptly at 6:00pm, 6:30pm, 7:00pm or 7:30pm. Outside wedding planners need not attend the rehearsal. While in the church, please be mindful that you are in a spiritual place. Keep a prayerful attitude and do not have social conversations or do or say anything that is not appropriate to worship.

Please be on time for the rehearsal and bring the following (if you have not already dropped them off at the Rectory/ Parish office):

1. Civil Marriage License
2. Bring a copy of the Liturgy Selection sheet which you submitted to the priest witnessing your wedding. The selection sheet should note the names of any readers and any other options discussed with your priest.

Wedding Banns

The Wedding Banns announce your upcoming wedding to the Saint Agnes parish community and are published in the parish bulletin three consecutive weeks before the wedding.

Liturgical Preparation

Music

Please contact the Music Office, *at least three months in advance* (weddings@stagnescathedral.org or 516-764-9578) to make arrangements. Forms for planning the music selections, as well as samples of the options available for your wedding, are available online at “www.stagnescathedral.org/music-ministry/wedding-music-selections”. **All arrangements for musical selections and musicians should be completed with the Music Office one month prior to the wedding.**

At each wedding there are two musicians: an organist and cantor. Additional musicians for the wedding liturgy (brass, strings, choirs) are also available and can be arranged through the Music Department. Permission for a guest organist or cantor must be obtained from the Music Department. If permission is granted, the music fee must still be provided by the couple.

Please remember that the music must be sacred texts (taken from scripture, inspired by scripture, liturgical in nature). Pieces not included on our selection sheet may not be approved if they are not in our hymnal. Secular songs, even instrumental, may not be used in the liturgy.

Liturgy Preparation

At your initial meeting with a priest from St. Agnes, you will receive the *Together for Life* booklet which contains the various options for your wedding ceremony (readings, etc.). Please contact the priest witnessing your wedding at least *six weeks in advance* to prepare your selections.

Mass/Ceremony

Due to the volume of weddings at Saint Agnes, *we can only offer a Ceremony without Mass to couples without a spiritual connection to the parish*, unless they provide their own priest to celebrate the Nuptial Mass. If the priest becomes unavailable, one of our priests will celebrate a Ceremony without Mass.

You will discuss with the priest whether your wedding will be a

Nuptial Mass or a Ceremony without Mass. He will be able to help you make the proper decisions. In making your decision, you will want to take into consideration whether your guests are accustomed to participating in the Catholic Mass.

A Nuptial Mass is a Mass which includes the celebration of the sacrament of marriage. It has special readings and prayers suitable to the Sacrament of Marriage. A Nuptial Mass is ordinarily celebrated on Fridays or Saturdays. Due to the number of regularly scheduled Masses at the Cathedral, the priests are not available to celebrate a Nuptial Mass on Sundays. If you wish to have a Nuptial Mass on a Sunday, you must provide your own priest.

The Ceremony without Mass contains all of the essential elements of a wedding but would not include the Liturgy of the Eucharist and Holy Communion.

Readers

The couple may invite one or two readers to proclaim the scripture readings. This person should be baptized Catholic, capable of public speaking, and comfortable in a church setting. The priest may give permission for a baptized non-Catholic to read. The priest may also do the readings, if you prefer.

Please give the readers a copy of your selected readings as printed in the *Together for Life* book so they may practice their reading before your wedding day. A copy of the reading will be in the pulpit for them to read. No loose sheets of paper should be carried up or taken out of the reader's pockets upon arriving at the pulpit.

There may be no deviation from the provided text or elaboration or comments by the reader.

A Note on Additional Ceremonies

The renewed *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* has included two optional rites that may be included as part of the wedding ceremony. These adaptations, important to Hispanic and Filipino cultures, have been approved for use in the dioceses of the United States in the Spanish edition since 2010.

The Hispanic culture gives us the tradition of the wedding coins, *arras*. The word *arras* literally means “pledge”. The Filipino culture gives us the *lazo* (large rosary draped over the couple) or veil. These are included as options in the Church's wedding rite for those who have this as part of their family wedding customs.

Additional ceremonies that are not included in the Church's wedding rite may not be included. A **“unity candle” may not be used in weddings at Saint Agnes, since it is not part of the Catholic Church's official wedding rite.**

The Day of Your Wedding at Saint Agnes Cathedral

Congratulations! Your wedding day is fast approaching. To help you on this day, here are a few pointers.

Absolutely NO alcoholic beverages are permitted in Church or on Church grounds.

The Bride and Groom are not permitted to consume any alcohol until after the wedding has been completed.

Punctuality

Because of the large number of weddings at St. Agnes Cathedral, it is important that your wedding begin on time. The groom, best man and ushers should be at the Cathedral at least one half hour before the scheduled wedding. The bride and her attendants should be at the Cathedral at least fifteen minutes before the ceremony. While in the church, please be mindful that you are in a spiritual place. Keep a prayerful attitude and do not have social conversations or do or say anything that is not appropriate to worship.

Please know that if you are more than fifteen minutes late from the scheduled time of your wedding celebration, the celebrant will alter your celebration (i.e. Mass will be altered to a Ceremony; scripture readings will be deleted and songs eliminated). If you are more than thirty minutes late, the cathedral musicians will be dismissed, though they will still be paid for their time.

Photo/Videographers

We ask the bride and groom to inform their photographer and/or videographer to check with the priest before the wedding begins to go over Church regulations. There will be no “restaging” of the ceremony once it is over, and photographers **must** stay out of the sanctuary area and should be as inconspicuous and unobtrusive as possible. Taking pictures and video during the ceremony is permitted as long as it does not detract from the liturgy. Flash should be used minimally, and floodlights are not allowed. If videography is desired, the camera should be placed on a stationary tripod throughout the ceremony.

Live streaming

The parish has a live-stream camera. You can request a live stream link that you provide to family/friends for viewing your ceremony on YouTube via a private link. Please note, you must notify the parish office one month in advance for the private live-stream link.

Flowers

The Cathedral provides two large arrangements of fresh-cut flowers in the sanctuary, delivered on Friday (except during the seasons of Advent and Lent). Couples may choose to work with the Cathedral's florist to donate the altar flowers. The cost is paid directly to the florist, who will assist the couple in creating arrangements that are appropriate for both the wedding and the Cathedral. A flower donation announcement will be included in our bulletin.

If using the arrangements provided by the Cathedral, the Couple may wish to make a donation of \$200 to memorialize the altar flowers in their name, which will be posted in our bulletin.

Pew decorations may be arranged through the florist of your choice. Nothing should be attached to the pews that could harm their finish. The Couple is responsible for making sure that all pew decorations are removed from the cathedral immediately following the wedding.

No flowers are permitted during the season of Lent (from Ash Wednesday until Easter Sunday).

Rice/Rose Petals/Birdseed/Confetti/Banners/Pets/Wagons

The use of rice, flower petals, bird seed or confetti is prohibited inside and/or outside of the Cathedral. Because of the sacredness of the Sacrament of Marriage, pets, carrying banners and/or signs, and pulling of wagons in the procession is prohibited.

White Runner

At the Cathedral we do not allow aisle runners because they are a tripping hazard and are a danger to your guests. We have had incidents where the runner has caused people to fall, therefore, the use of aisle runners is prohibited.

Cell Phones/Electronic Devices

Due to the solemnity of the Sacrament of Marriage all members of the wedding party and guests should turn off their cell phones and other electronic devices so as not to distract or take away from the celebration.

Tipping Servers and Sexton

It is customary to offer Altar Servers and Sextons a monetary tip for their service. A tip of \$10.00 to each server and to the sexton on duty is appreciated. We thank you for your generosity.

Check List

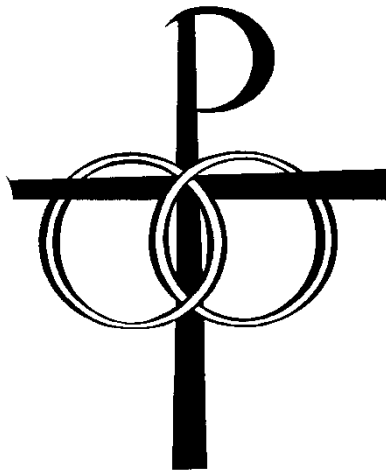
Required:

- Baptismal Certificate
 - Groom
 - Bride
- Pre-Cana Certificate
- Fee To Church
- Fee To Music Department
- Civil Marriage License
- Liturgy Preparation Form
- Music Selections
- Rehearsal Date
- Confession

Required in Particular Circumstances:

- Letter of Permission (Required for those who live outside the parish boundaries)
- Dispensation for Mixed Marriage (Required if bride or groom is not Catholic)
- Other Dispensations/Defect of Form/Annulment

May God bless you and keep you on
your Wedding Day and every day of
your life together



Cordially in Christ,

The Priests, Staff, and Parishioners of
St. Agnes Cathedral

Revised November 2025