

**SAINT PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
**619 Tenth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001**  
**202.347.2713**  
**office@saintpatrickdc.org**

**MARRIAGE GUIDELINES**

The purpose of these guidelines is to help you celebrate and live the vocation of love in the sacrament of marriage. The Church's treasure of prayer and worship, learning and service, contemplation and spiritual guidance are always available to you. The grace of the sacrament of matrimony and the power of commitment that you have made to each other are the continuing wellsprings of strength. The people of Saint Patrick Parish pray that you will discover these treasures together and that your wedding day will be a happy and memorable one for you and your families and friends.

**PLACE FOR THE WEDDING**

The customary place for the celebration of a Catholic marriage is the parish of the Catholic party. **For weddings at Saint Patrick Church, you must either live within the boundaries of the parish or have been a registered parishioner for several years.** The pastor is responsible for the preparation of any couple to be married at Saint Patrick. When the engaged couple first contact the pastor, he will explain the program and how the process of preparation will proceed. Ordinarily, he will do all the paper work with the couple and schedule marriage preparation as well, or he will delegate this task to another priest or deacon. You should contact the parish at least six months before the date you would like to be married.

**MINISTER OF THE WEDDING**

Normally, one of the priests or deacons who assist at the parish is invited to celebrate your wedding. However, if you wish to invite a priest or deacon from outside the parish, please speak with the pastor.

**WEDDING TIMES AVAILABLE**

Saturday at 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

No weddings are celebrated on Sunday.

Monday-Friday: By special arrangement with the pastor.

A wedding date can be set only after the couple meets with the priest.

**MARRIAGE PREPARATION (PRE-CANA)**

You must enroll in a Catholic marriage preparation program to prepare for your wedding. Some of the ones available in the Archdiocese of Washington include:

**Archdiocese of Washington.** Two consecutive Saturdays, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at various sites throughout the archdiocese. For info visit: [www.adw.org](http://www.adw.org) or send an email to: [flm@adw.org](mailto:flm@adw.org).

**Saint Peter Parish on Capitol Hill.** Three consecutive Saturdays, 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Saint Peter Church, 313 Second Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003. For info visit: [www.saintpetersdc.org](http://www.saintpetersdc.org) or send an email to [dre@saintpetersdc.org](mailto:dre@saintpetersdc.org) or call 202.547.1430 x107.

**Catholic Engaged Encounter.** One weekend (Friday to Sunday) at hotels in the DC area. For info visit: [www.dcengagedencounter.org](http://www.dcengagedencounter.org).

**“Three to Get Married”.** Thursday and Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday at Our Lady of Bethesda Retreat Center, 7007 Bradley Boulevard, Bethesda, MD 20817. For info visit: [www.bethesdacfd.org](http://www.bethesdacfd.org).

## **LITURGICAL PREPARATION**

Two weeks before the wedding, the couple should meet with the priest or deacon officiating at their wedding and bring with them the liturgical selections taken from the *Together for Life* booklet. At the same time, the couple should also bring the offering for the parish and the marriage license from the District of Columbia.

## **REHEARSALS**

Rehearsals are normally scheduled the evening before the wedding at 5:00 p.m. The wedding parties are requested to be punctual.

## **SACRISTAN**

The presence of a sacristan is needed for the rehearsal and on the wedding day to facilitate the ceremony and the care of the invited guests. The fee is \$150, made payable to Peter Ceesay, and should be given to the priest at the rehearsal.

## **OFFERING**

It is customary to give an offering to the parish on the occasion of the wedding, since the preparation and celebration of the wedding involve considerable time and expense. The offering for the church is \$750.00. This does not include the fees for musicians. The check should be made out to Saint Patrick Catholic Church and should be given to the parish at least one week before the wedding. Any offering for the priest or deacon who is celebrating your wedding should be given to him directly.

## **MUSIC**

Music selections should reflect the religious nature of a wedding celebrated in the church. Therefore, music of a secular nature, like selections from operas, musicals, movies, etc., is not permitted. Please contact Mr. Ronald Stolk, Music Director, at [rstolk@saintpatrickdc.org](mailto:rstolk@saintpatrickdc.org), to discuss music for your wedding. An organist and cantor are required for wedding Masses. The fee for the organist is \$250, made payable to Ronald Stolk, and should be given to the priest at the rehearsal. The fee for the cantor is \$200, made payable to Karen Lautman, and should be given to the priest at the rehearsal.

## **PROGRAM**

If the couple wishes to print a program for the wedding ceremony, a draft of the program must be emailed to the Director of Music at [rstolk@saintpatrickdc.org](mailto:rstolk@saintpatrickdc.org) for approval before printing. A sample wedding program with appropriate format may be obtained from the parish office.

## **FLOWERS**

Flowers may be obtained from the florist of your choice. It is customary to leave the flowers for use at the altar after the wedding. Please call the rectory for information regarding the placement of flowers and for information on florists.

## **RICE, BIRD SEED, FLOWER PETALS, RUNNER**

The throwing of rice, bird seed, flower petals or any other object either inside or outside the church, and the use of a runner for the center aisle, are strictly forbidden for safety reasons.

## **PHOTOGRAPHERS**

You may have the photographer/videographer of your choice record the wedding ceremony. Your marriage is a solemn and important event for you, and therefore your photographer should conduct himself or herself in an unobtrusive manner which respects the religious ceremony taking place. Please inform your photographer to speak with the priest before the wedding ceremony to discuss placement during the ceremony. Flash equipment may be used. Photographers are not allowed in the sanctuary (near the altar). After the celebration, the church will be open for taking pictures. **Please limit the time for pictures to a maximum of fifteen (15) minutes.**

## **RECEIVING LINE**

In order to ensure the smooth flow of the liturgy and to allow time to prepare for other liturgical celebrations following the wedding, the wedding party may not form a receiving line at the door of the church.

## **DRESSING ROOM**

The church does not have dressing room facilities for the bride or the wedding party.

## **CIVIL LICENSE**

A Civil Marriage License from the District of Columbia must be obtained by the couple. You may apply for this license at:

Marriage License Bureau  
500 Indiana Avenue, NW  
Room 4485  
Washington, DC 20001  
202.879.4840  
[www.dccourts.gov](http://www.dccourts.gov)

DC law requires that a minister officiating at a wedding ceremony must be licensed by DC. If you are inviting a priest or deacon to celebrate your marriage who is not yet licensed in DC, please speak with the pastor.

## **DOCUMENTATION**

The officiating priest or deacon is responsible for all the necessary paperwork for a couple's wedding. Among the required documentation are the following:

- **Baptismal Certificates** (one current copy for baptized persons, obtained by each party through the place of one's baptism).
- **Preuptial Questionnaire** (administered to each separately).
- **Preuptial Witness Affidavit** (indicating neither party has been married before)
- **Permission for Mixed Marriage** (for a Catholic to marry a baptized non-Catholic).
- **Dispensation from Disparity of Cult** (For a Catholic to marry an unbaptized person).
- **Letter of Freedom** from one's pastor (if applicable).
- **Certification** of participation in an approved Catholic marriage preparation program.
- **Civil License** obtained by the couple from the D.C. Government.

If either party has been married before, one of the following:

- **Declaration of Nullity of Bond** due to lack of canonical form.
- **Declaration of Annulment** for formerly attempted marriages.
- **Declaration of Death** of previous spouse.