



The Sacrament of Marriage

SACRED HEART PARISH
Havertown, PA

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! Your decision to prepare for marriage is an important sign of your love and commitment to each other. Your decision to seek marriage within the Catholic Church is an important sign of your recognition that ***sacramental*** marriage is an opportunity to grow in your experience and knowledge of God.

While it is true to say that you have found love in each other, it is even more true to say that Love – who is God – has found you in each other. Christian marriage makes God’s love visible in this world. Your love for each other enriches God’s Church and becomes a means to your own salvation.

The Church helps you prepare both for the day of your wedding and for your life together as husband and wife. Formal marriage preparation involving the FOCCUS inventory, participation in a Pre-Cana program, and prayerful use of the booklet Together for Life will help you grow in grace as you come to know yourselves and each other more fully. In addition, we encourage you to prepare yourselves by developing lives of prayer centered on the sacramental life of the Church. In the Sacrament of Penance (confession) we come into intimate personal contact with the Divine Lover who always seeks to forgive. At the Sunday Mass, especially when we receive the Holy Eucharist, we are made one with the Lord who sacrifices – laying down His life for others, who always seeks to give and forgive unconditionally. By regularly participating in the sacramental life you will be strengthened by God’s grace and empowered to “forgive, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes.”

BASIC POLICIES

1. In order to be married at Sacred Heart at least one of you must be a **registered parishioner** of Sacred Heart Parish.
2. In accord with Archdiocesan policy, arrangements for weddings must be made at least **six months** prior to the desired date.
3. For everything that happens within the Church, the priest or his staff representative will be your only “coordinator”. Should you wish to hire someone else to help you coordinate your wedding plans, you and that person need to understand that her/his involvement will be limited to activities taking place off the church premises.
4. Couples preparing to marry will need to meet with a priest who will help you attend to the details of marriage preparation. Generally, in addition to an **initial** meeting to set the date and begin the process, you can expect to meet with the priest **six months** prior to the date of the wedding to complete:
 - The **FOCCUS** Inventory - (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study)
 - Necessary paperwork
 - Review the Mass/Ceremony details.

The couple is responsible for scheduling these meetings, by calling the Parish Center at **610-449-3000**.

www.sacredheartmanoa.org

NUPTIAL MASS OR CEREMONY

Because the Eucharist feeds and nourishes the Catholic Christian on her/his journey of faith and because the Eucharist, like Christian marriage, makes God's love visible to the world, the Church urges Catholics to consider marrying within the context of a Mass.

As part of your spiritual preparation for marriage, Catholic couples are called to participate weekly in the Sunday liturgy and to regularly avail themselves of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist.

A reflection on the importance of the Eucharist in your life should help Catholic couples to discern whether to marry within the celebration of Mass.

In some cases, couples of different religious backgrounds seek marriage in the Catholic Church. Couples made up of a Catholic and a Christian from another religious tradition are called to reflect on the strength of their common faith in Christ Jesus and to strive to model their marital love on the love Christ has for His bride, the Church.

Couples of mixed religion may choose to have their marriage either within the context of Mass or as a nuptial ceremony outside of Mass. Due consideration must be given to the faith tradition of the non-Catholic party and his/her family when making this decision. Consideration should also be given to the Catholic Eucharistic practice of inviting only practicing Catholics to receive Holy Communion.

In accord with Catholic Church law, marriage between a Catholic and a person who is not baptized is to be celebrated as a nuptial ceremony outside of Mass.

PERMISSION/DISPENSATION

In accord with Catholic Church law, a permission or dispensation is required from the Archbishop for a Catholic to marry someone from another faith tradition. This permission/dispensation requires two important commitments of the Catholic party:

1.) Catholics must reaffirm their faith in Christ Jesus and commit to continue living that faith in the Catholic Church; and

2.) Catholics must promise to do all in their power to share the Catholic faith with all their children by having them baptized and reared as Catholics.

Naturally, sufficient discussion about these commitments as well as the emotional and spiritual issues they may stir up in your relationship should take place as you prepare to begin your family in the celebration of marriage



VISITING CLERGY

Couples are welcome to invite a priest who is a family member or friend to witness their marriage. The visiting priest is asked to contact the priest assisting you with your marriage preparation at his earliest convenience to confirm his desire to witness your marriage. The visiting priest should also notify the parish as to whether he plans to direct the wedding rehearsal.

Normally, a priest from the parish will continue to meet with you to complete the necessary paperwork and assist in your spiritual preparation for marriage.

A non-Catholic minister or rabbi may be invited to participate in a wedding ceremony that takes place outside of Mass.

PRE-CANA

Couples are required to participate in a Pre-Cana program. Named for the site of our Lord's first miracle, the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee, this marriage preparation program can take different forms. The Parish of Sacred Heart offers a Pre-Cana program once every year in the fall. Consult the parish calendar for dates.

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia offers Pre-Cana in various parishes or schools. Information about the Archdiocesan programs is contained in a booklet, which is available at the Parish Center.

Another option is "Engaged Encounter." Information can be found on their website: www.engagedencounter.org.



REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

1. **BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATES:** Catholic parties present a *newly issued* certificate from their parish of baptism. This certificate is to be dated not more than six months prior to the date of your wedding. Baptized non-Catholics must present a certificate or some other proof of their baptism.
2. **PRE-MARRIAGE WITNESS TESTIMONY:** Both parties present the witness testimony of two adults who have known you your entire adult lives. This testimony, given to a priest or deacon, may be taken via telephone if necessary.

3. **LETTER OF FREEDOM TO MARRY:** Catholics who are not registered members of Sacred Heart Parish present a “Letter of Freedom to Marry” from their parish.
4. **FOCCUS INVENTORY:** The FOCCUS Inventory (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study) is a tool used to help you open some important doors of communication. This inventory is sometimes administered as part of your Pre-Cana process. If not, you should schedule an appointment to complete it with your consulting priest
5. **PRE-CANA CERTIFICATE:** At the end of your Pre-Cana program, you will receive a certificate of completion. Give this certificate to your consulting priest.
6. **PRE-NUPTIAL INVESTIGATION (PNI):** This questionnaire is usually completed when the couple meets with their consulting priest, approximately six months prior to the wedding date
7. **MARRIAGE LICENSE:** A license is required from the Clerk of the Orphan’s Court of Pennsylvania. It can be obtained in any County Seat (the Delaware County Courthouse is in Media, PA). Marriage licenses are valid for 60 days
8. In the event that either party has been previously married (even civilly), a death certificate or a decree of nullity is needed.

CHURCH FEES

Church: \$300
Organist: \$150
Cantor: \$150

Normally, two parish altar servers will be assigned to serve your wedding. We ask that you give a gift of at least \$10.00 to each server.

Please notify the priest if you have made arrangements to provide your own altar servers.



PLANNING YOUR WEDDING

MUSIC

Please make arrangements with our Parish Music Director, Mary Ann Allton, who will assist you with appropriate musical selections. Ms. Allton can be contacted at 610-449-3000, 215-470-5659 or at shpallton@comcast.net

Ms. Allton can also assist you with the recommendation of a soloist for your wedding.



READINGS

So that you may participate fully in the planning of your wedding liturgy, the book **Together for Life** will be provided. This book contains all of the options couples have in choosing the readings, prayers, blessings, vows, etc., which may be used in the liturgy.

We encourage that practicing Catholics serve as readers at Mass. Readers should be given the texts of their readings well in advance in order that they might be well prepared.



FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS

You are NOT required to purchase flowers to decorate the church. If you choose to do so, please keep in mind the liturgical season in which your wedding is to take place. During the penitential seasons of advent and lent, the church décor is to be subdued. During the Christmas and Easter seasons, the church will already be well decorated. Please use good judgment in this area. Also, you may wish to inquire whether there will be other weddings on the same weekend as yours so that this expense might be shared.

It is normally assumed that flowers purchased for the church will remain there for the weekend Masses.

SIGN OF PEACE

The “sign of peace” at Mass is a remembrance of the Lord’s Easter gift of Peace – that is, forgiveness. Please consider keeping this sign as simple as is intended in the liturgy. It is unnecessary to purchase flowers, as it can be distracting to distribute gifts at this part of the Mass.



PHOTOGRAPHS

While professional photographers or videographers are permitted to take pictures during your wedding, they are required to be professional, respectful and reverent. Use of the camera flash and/or additional lighting should be kept to a minimum so as to avoid distraction. Photographers are not permitted into the Sanctuary during the wedding.

Photographs may be taken in church for a short time immediately following the wedding. While we understand that you and your bridal party will be excited and that your photographer will be working, we ask you to be mindful of the church setting and the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

Photographs need to be finished by 3:20 PM.
(Confessions begin in church at 3:30 PM on Saturdays)

AISLE RUNNER

The use of an “aisle runner” for weddings in church is no longer permitted. In former days, runners were used at outdoor ceremonies to protect the bride’s gown and were made of cloth. Now made of thin plastic, they can easily be torn or bunched and can cause people to trip. They have, unfortunately, become a liability.

UNITY CANDLES

“Unity candles” are not part of the Catholic wedding ceremony. If you wish to use these candles, consider having them in a place of prominence at your reception.

ACTIVITY OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

Sometimes in the joy and excitement of the occasion, families and friends engage in various forms of celebration. Some of these even have the distinction of being “traditions”. Please discourage your guests from any activity that might be unbecoming to the spiritual nature of the events and place.

**Please – No alcoholic beverages of any kind
on church property*

Due to liability concerns, the use of rice, confetti, birdseed, flower petals, etc. is strictly forbidden. Nothing may be thrown or dropped anywhere on church property.

Balloons are not permitted inside the church.



Finally, among all the things you need to do when you return from your honeymoon, please be so kind as to register your new family at the parish in which you will be living, and notify your former parishes of your move.



SACRED HEART CHURCH
105 Wilson Avenue
Havertown, Pa 19083

WWW.SACREDHEARTMANOA.ORG

Parish Office: 610-449-3000
Fax: 610-449-2364

E-Mail: Rev. Henry McKee shpmckee@comcast.net
Pastor

Ms. Mary Ann Allton shpallton@comcast.net
Music Director

Mrs. Jean Murray shpmurray@comcast.net
Parish Secretary

MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday Vigil: 5:00PM
Sunday: 7:30AM - 9:30AM - 11:30AM
Tues – Sat: 8:30AM

HOLY DAY SCHEDULE

As listed in Parish Bulletin or on website

CONFESSIONS

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Saturday Afternoons: 3:30 – 4:30PM