

Catholic Wedding Preparation

PREPARATION AT NEWMAN FOR A WEDDING ELSEWHERE

Who officiates at the wedding?

A Catholic wedding is witnessed by a Catholic priest or deacon in good standing. You should consult with him prior to selecting your date to determine his availability for the date(s) and time(s) you prefer. If he is not a priest or deacon of the local Diocese, he will need to submit a Letter of Suitability from his diocese indicating that he is in good standing.

Scheduling the Wedding and Rehearsal

Preparation for the celebration of Matrimony requires at least six (6) months. Catholic weddings are ordinarily not permitted outside of a house of worship unless particular interfaith sensitivity is required.

Preparation

- After your wedding date has been determined, you will be registered for an on-line inventory entitled *Fully Engaged*. Take the inventory separately and as soon as possible. Your priest or deacon will then go over the inventory with you in 2-3 meetings to review the nature of the sacrament of Marriage and discuss issues of married life.
- As soon as possible, because space is limited, register <https://dioceseofraleigh.org/marriage-and-family-life/register-marriage-prep> to attend one full-day workshop (Pre-Cana Class). Participation in this workshop (or another equivalency) is required for the celebration of Catholic marriage.
- In a final meeting, the necessary paperwork is collected and the ceremony is planned; a planning guide is available.

What if we don't both live here?

If both of you do not live in the Chapel Hill area, arrangements can be planned when you are both together in Chapel Hill. Much of the preparation can also be done via Zoom, but at least one of the meetings legally must take place in person.

Marriage between a Catholic and a person of another faith

If one of the parties is a member of another faith tradition or of no faith tradition, permissions are required from the Diocese of Raleigh. These are for the most part routine, but it does require some conversation regarding how the Catholic party plans to live out the faith and share it with your children.

If the party who is of another faith desires to have a member of their clergy present for the ceremony, they are welcome and can work with the Catholic officiant to determine what role (if any) they will play in the ceremony, keeping in mind the nature of Catholic ritual.

Required documentation

- A current (within six months) copy of each party's Baptismal certificate, available from the parish of Baptism for Catholics, and from the records of many other Christian churches;

- An affidavit signed by two witnesses (generally the parents) of each party, swearing that they either have or have not been baptized, and have or have not been previously married;
- A certificate of completion of the diocesan Pre-Cana workshop;
- A Marriage License must be obtained within a certain amount of time prior to the wedding date. Different jurisdictions have different rules/laws in this regard. Contact the local jurisdiction where your wedding will take place to find out what steps you need to take to acquire your marriage license.

Planning the Ceremony

The Sacrament of Marriage may be celebrated either during Mass or in a simple ceremony. This decision is made between the couple and the priest or deacon who is officiating. If one of the spouses is of another Christian tradition, it is recommended that the Marriage be celebrated in a simple ceremony; if one of the spouses is not a baptized Christian, the wedding is always a ceremony outside of Mass.

The ceremony will require the attention of both of the spouses as you prepare for your wedding. A reminder that no wedding ceremony is perfect, and more importantly, this sacrament is a religious service that should reflect a decorum that is different from other types of celebrations. Please check with the Church where the wedding is taking place to understand specific guidelines for a wedding at that location. To plan for the ceremony, we will provide you with liturgical resources.

Music is an important dimension of a liturgical moment such as a wedding. You will need to coordinate the music through the music director at the parish where your wedding will take place.

Other specifics of the ceremony will be reviewed with the officiant.

Fees

- Consult the church where you will celebrate your wedding, as there may be a fee structure for use of the Church. There is never a fee for a sacrament in the Catholic Church.
- If you wish to make a donation to Newman in honor of your wedding day, thank you for your thoughtfulness.
- If you wish to make an offering to the priest/deacon who officiates, thank you for your thoughtfulness.