



Wedding Guidelines



the National Shrine
of St. Rita of Cascia
Augustinian Province of St. Thomas of Villanova

Congratulations

on your recent engagement! We are excited and ready to accompany you through this special time as we prepare for your wedding day. These guidelines are meant to help couples understand what to expect when making a decision about celebrating the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony at the National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia.

We ask that each couple carefully read and consider all of the requirements prior to submitting a signed contract (pp.8-9). Most of these guidelines have been established by the Catholic Church and are standard if you wish to have a sacramental marriage, but there are a few additional guidelines observed at the Shrine outlined in this packet as well. Please carefully read through these guidelines and contact our Wedding Coordinator if you have any questions.

The Process

1. Carefully read through these guidelines, making notes about questions that pop up along the way.
2. Contact the Shrine's Wedding Coordinator to confirm your intended wedding date. You should also contact the priest (for a Nuptial Mass or Wedding Ceremony) or deacon (only for a Wedding Ceremony) to confirm their availability.
3. Return a completed contract (pp.8-9) and \$500 non-refundable deposit.
4. Schedule an initial in-person meeting with the Shrine's Wedding Coordinator to review the required documentation, ask questions, and confirm a timeline for preparations.
5. Meet with your presider to complete the required documentation and prepare for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.
6. Submit all final payments and completed documentation to the Shrine one month prior to your wedding.
7. Get married!

Getting Married in the Catholic Church

Celebrating your wedding in a Catholic ceremony means that you share the Church's beliefs about marriage. Most importantly, you must be in good faith towards the Catholic Church. The Shrine is not merely a "wedding venue" like a reception hall. Your vows express a covenant love for one another that builds up the body of the whole Church, and the Shrine is the faith community that witnesses your promises. One of the parties getting married must be Catholic. Even if your faith is weak and your religious practice is not strong, we will work with you. But you must be willing to acknowledge your faith and express an openness to the graces that the sacrament confers upon you as a couple.

At the National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia, we are eager to welcome everyone who desires to enter into a valid Catholic marriage, is in "good faith," and is suitably prepared to do so!

Who to Contact

If you wish to explore the possibility of getting married at the National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia, your first step is to contact the Shrine's Wedding Coordinator about your intentions. Our Wedding Coordinator will be your point person for the Shrine and will provide invaluable guidance throughout the preparation, planning, rehearsal, and day-of process:

Mrs. Valerie Iezzi
weddings@saintrita Shrine.org
267-414-8506

We also recommend contacting the presider (priest or deacon) that you intend to have serve as the witness to your marriage. Among other things, they will be responsible for guiding you through your marriage preparation, completing the necessary paperwork (and dispensations, if appropriate), and witnessing your wedding. We encourage you to ask a priest or deacon that you have a prior relationship with (from your parish, college or university campus ministry, family member or friend, etc.). If you don't have anyone in mind, let us know and we will do our best to help you find a good fit.

Wedding Fees

- ✎ The stipend for the use of the Shrine is \$2,000.
 - A non-refundable deposit of \$500 is due with the signed contract (pp.8-9) to book the date of your wedding.
 - The balance of \$1,500 is due at least one month before the date of your wedding.
 - These fees can be paid by cash or check. Checks can be made payable to *the National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia*, and mailed to 1166 South Broad Street, Philadelphia PA 19146, Attn: Valerie Iezzi, Wedding Coordinator.

- ✎ The musicians' fee is \$550.
 - \$300 is for the Shrine's organist.
 - \$250 is for the Shrine's cantor.
 - These fees can also be paid by cash or check. Checks for the musicians should be made payable to each individual musician one month before the date of your wedding. You may send the musicians' checks to the Shrine along with your other payments.

- ✎ The recommended gift for your presider is between \$100 and \$200.
 - Many couples like to give their presiding priest or deacon a \$100 gift to show appreciation for the time spent preparing you as well as for their presence on your wedding day.

- ✎ If you find that these fees are prohibitive to getting married at the Shrine, please let us know. We are willing to discuss a payment plan, or the possibility of a reduced rate.

Scheduling

Since preparing to enter into marriage requires a suitable period of time, we normally expect the date of your wedding to be at least six months from your initial call to the Shrine. However, calling even further in advance better ensures that the date you wish will be available. Please contact our Wedding Coordinator as soon as possible, if you are planning to get married in less than six months. While there is no guarantee, we will do our best to help each couple meet their intended date.

Assuming it is available, we will put a two-month soft-hold on our calendar after speaking with you. Your wedding date will officially be booked once we receive your signed contract (pp.8-9) and \$500 non-refundable deposit.

Weddings may be scheduled at the Shrine on most Fridays and Saturdays of the year. Nuptial Masses may be scheduled to begin between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and in the afternoons or evenings on Fridays. Wedding Ceremonies may be scheduled to begin between 10:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on Saturdays, and in the afternoons or evenings on Fridays. Sunday weddings are possible, but depend upon scheduling and availability. Please note that rehearsals will be scheduled according to the availability of the church.

Music

The National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia offers beautiful music for those getting married in our historic church. Our musicians are trained professionals with years of experience. Our in-house musicians are happy to provide appropriate musical accompaniment for your wedding ceremony or Mass. They are well-versed in a wide range of classical, traditional, and contemporary song selections and are familiar with the order of the wedding Mass.

Once you have booked your date, we encourage you to immediately contact our Director of Sacred Music to schedule an initial phone call. We ask that you book one of our cantors, who have experience singing for Catholic liturgies at our Shrine. Any special circumstances must be discussed with our Director of Sacred Music.

A sampling of wedding music can be found on the Shrine's website. If you have other sacred music in mind, please let us know. All music for the liturgy must be on the approved list according to the Archdiocesan guidelines. Secular or pop music is not allowed.

Wedding Policies

1. Bows or flowers are allowed, but only if attached by strings or elastic bands that will not remove varnish from the wooden pews or leave marks on the marble tile. No tape of any sort is to be used. You are to arrange to have anything you bring into the church removed after your wedding. If you wish to leave your flower arrangements, you may do so.
2. Runners and lighted candles are not permitted; they create a safety hazard in the Shrine.
3. Flowers or petals are not permitted to be dropped or thrown inside the church as part of the procession. Rice or confetti are not to be thrown outside the church after the wedding.
4. Columns, trees, or plants of any kind are not permitted in the aisles or the sanctuary. Guests must have an unobstructed view of the ceremony and be able to enter and exit pews from both sides according to fire laws.
5. Camera and video equipment should be placed so as not to obstruct the congregation's view. The videographer or photographer should speak with the priest before the wedding. No videographer or photographer is allowed in the sanctuary area (on the altar-side of the altar rail) during the wedding. And, we do not allow videographers to hook into our sound system.
6. Pictures may be taken in the church after the wedding. We ask you to be considerate and aware that the Shrine has other scheduled Masses and events. We ask the wedding party and photographer to be appropriately respectful of the sanctuary and altar area.
7. No food, drink, or alcohol is permitted on the premises before, during, or after the wedding rehearsal or ceremony. **The presence of alcohol on the Shrine grounds will incur a \$750 fine.**
8. Weddings and rehearsals are expected to begin at the time indicated on the signed wedding contract. Any changes to the dates or times listed must be made no less than a month in advance. Any wedding or rehearsal that begins more than 20 minutes after the agreed upon time will be shortened to accommodate the time constraints.
9. We do not provide altar servers for the Mass. Altar servers are not required, however, family members or friends are welcome to serve in this capacity.
10. The area directly in front of the church will be reserved for the bridal party with traffic cones. The Shrine also has access to a parking lot on 15th Street, around the corner from the Shrine, for weddings. It is a private, secure parking lot that is available for couples and their guests at no additional cost. Additionally, the Shrine is located on the Broad Street subway line at the Ellsworth-Federal stop.

Required Documentation

We will work with you and your presider to ensure the following paperwork is properly completed and submitted at the appropriate times. Please note: if you live outside of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, this paperwork must be forwarded by your presider through the local Bishop's Office first. This is most important.

- ✦ A packet of the following documentation is due one month before your wedding date:
 - ☐ A letter of permission is required from the pastor of the parish of either the bride or groom. If you are not registered with a parish, please let the Wedding Coordinator know during your initial conversation. Parish registration is a prerequisite to getting married at the Shrine that we can help you with.
 - ☐ The Pre-Nuptial Investigation (PNI) form is completed by the couple and the presider who will witness your wedding. In addition to the PNI, witness forms (2 for each person) will need to be completed by family members or very close friends with your presider as well. The witness forms should be forwarded to the presider and included with the PNI.
 - ☐ A recently issued baptismal certificate is required of both baptized parties. Contact your church of baptism to request a new copy of your baptismal certificate. When calling your church of baptism, please tell them that the certificate is for marriage purposes. Also, please make sure that the name and address of the church of baptism are on the certificate so that we can send notification of your marriage to them.
 - ☐ The couple must attend Pre-Cana marriage preparation (in-person or online). A certificate of completion should be given to your presider. We do not offer Pre-Cana at the Shrine, but can recommend reasonable options to couples.
 - ☐ In some cases, it is possible that an “impediment to marriage” within the Catholic Church exists. If this is the case, your presider will need to petition the Archdiocese of Philadelphia for a dispensation, and include that paperwork with the rest of your documentation. The most common impediments are the existence of a previous marriage or the fact that one of the parties is not a baptized Roman Catholic (this is called “mixed religion”). Frequently, an impediment, like mixed religion, can readily be removed simply by petitioning for a dispensation. Other impediments, like a previous marriage, may prove to take more time and may be more problematic.

A word of caution: You shouldn't make a judgment about your legal circumstances without consulting a competent Church official. At the National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia, we will help determine if any impediments apply to you and, if so, how you can deal with them. We cannot guarantee that your wedding can be celebrated at the Shrine until it is determined that no impediments apply to you as a couple.

🔥 The following documentation is due two weeks before your wedding:

- ☐ Your Pennsylvania Marriage License must be obtained prior to your marriage. The license is valid for sixty [60] days. Please obtain the civil license four or five weeks before your wedding date. We suggest that you drop the marriage license off at the Shrine two weeks before the wedding date. The signed document will be given back to you at the conclusion of your wedding. The civil license must be obtained in Pennsylvania.

Preparations for your Wedding Ceremony

1. A printed booklet or program is completely optional but is the couple's responsibility. Examples from previous weddings are available upon request. Care must be exercised regarding any copyrighted materials you wish to use (e.g., the prayer texts, Scripture texts, music or music texts). You will need the proper permission of the copyright holder.
2. You may have up to three Lectors (readers); for the First and Second Readings and the Prayer of the Faithful. A family member, a friend or member of the wedding party may read. If the wedding is in the context of Mass, the lector is to be a practicing Catholic. If it is a wedding ceremony alone, a non-Catholic may read. Arrangements should be made and discussed with your presider ahead of time.
3. You may wish to choose one or two people to bring up the bread and wine at the Offertory (if you are having a Nuptial Mass). They are to be practicing Catholics.
4. In preparation to receive the Sacrament of Marriage, we encourage you to receive the Sacrament of Penance by going to Confession. We also encourage the members of the wedding party and family members go to confession before the day of the rehearsal.
5. Catholic couples may receive Holy Communion under both species (the Host and from the Chalice) on the occasion of their wedding. Catholics in attendance who are properly prepared to receive Holy Communion will receive in the usual manner, the Host only. For those receiving Communion, the Eucharistic Fast is refraining from food and liquid (except water) for one hour before receiving. Please include in your booklet that only Catholics, who are properly prepared, may receive Holy Communion.
6. Praying before the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary is an option which is traditionally done at the end of the wedding ceremony. It is the couple's responsibility to provide any flowers you wish to be presented at this time.

Wedding Contract

Once you have read through the Wedding Guidelines (pp. 1-7) and decide that you would like to get married at the National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia, please fill out this Wedding Contract and submit it with a \$500 non-refundable deposit to:

Mrs. Valerie Iezzi, Wedding Coordinator
National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia
1166 South Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA, 19146

Wedding Date: _____ Day of Week: _____ Time of Day: _____

The Shrine Office will contact you when we receive this contract to confirm your date and time.

Check One: NUPTIAL MASS (with Communion) WEDDING CEREMONY ONLY (no Communion)

Rehearsal Date: _____ Day of Week: _____ Time of Day: _____

Rehearsal dates will be confirmed by the Shrine Office a few months before your wedding.

I agree to the terms and policies in this agreement with the National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia.

Signature of Bride and Groom: _____

Bride's <u>Full</u> Name: _____	Previously married in any context? _____
Address: _____	
Phone: _____	E-mail: _____
Date of Birth: _____	
Religion: _____	
Parish name & city (if applicable): _____	

Groom's <u>Full</u> Name: _____	Previously married in any context? _____
Address: _____	
Phone: _____	E-mail: _____
Date of Birth: _____	
Religion: _____	
Parish name & city (if applicable): _____	

Your presider plays an important role in the preparation and celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage. The Shrine requires a letter of suitability or of good standing from each visiting priest (from outside the Archdiocese of Philadelphia) prior to your wedding. Sharing as much information as possible will help us to coordinate our efforts with your presider. Additional details and next steps can be discussed with the Wedding Coordinator during your initial phone call. **Please complete the contact information for the priest or deacon who will witness your marriage and conduct the rehearsal:**

Presider's Name: _____ Phone: _____

Relationship to Couple: _____ E-mail: _____

Current Parish/ Ministry: _____

Current Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

*****Please note: Your presider must meet with you and coordinate your wedding preparation and corresponding paperwork. They must also be present to conduct your rehearsal as well as preside at your wedding.*****

We, the undersigned, agree to accept all of the guidelines, policies, and conditions as outlined and stated above. By submitting this contract with a \$500 non-refundable deposit, we confirm our decision to be married at the National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia on the following date and time, barring any major unforeseen circumstance:

Wedding Date: _____ Day of Week: _____ Time of Day: _____

Bride's Name: _____ Bride's Signature: _____

Groom's Name: _____ Groom's Signature: _____

FOR OFFICE USE:

\$500 Deposit Check #: _____ Date: _____ \$1,500 Balance Check #: _____ Date: _____