



Wedding Guidelines

The Co-Cathedral of St. Robert Bellarmine

1. Congratulations on the occasion of your wedding. We at St. Robert Bellarmine look forward to preparing you for the Sacrament of Marriage and the life you two will share afterwards. At St. Robert, each couple is asked to meet with the parish priest/deacon to schedule their date. **No date can be set without an appointment with the parish priest/deacon.**
2. Those Catholics that are not parishioners, who request to be married at St. Robert, must present a letter granting permission from their parish priest to be married at St. Robert.
3. Couples that request to be married at St. Robert that live out of state will need to prepare for their wedding in the parish in which they are registered. Although, such couples need to meet with our parish priest/deacon to set the date, the necessary paperwork must be done with the parish in which they currently live. This paperwork includes:
 - A Letter of Permission from the pastor of the parish in which they are registered.
 - The Pre-Nuptial Inquiry
 - Needed dispensations and permissions
 - Pre-wedding counseling or Pre-Cana: Each diocese has different requirements, and the couple must fulfill the requirements of the diocese in which they live.
 - Liturgy planning, following the parish guidelines of St. Robert Bellarmine

The wedding file must be mailed to St. Robert two (2) months before the wedding date.

4. A couple preparing for marriage may have a family member or close friend who is a priest or a deacon, whom they want to witness their wedding. Visiting clergy are welcomed at St. Robert Bellarmine, and the parish priests will work with them to allow this possibility. Family members and friends that are clergy will be expected to follow the parish guidelines and you should share these guidelines with your priest or deacon. We do ask visiting priests or deacons, if not members of the Diocese of Trenton, to forward a letter of good standing from their Bishop or Religious superior six (6) months before the wedding date.

5. As you prepare for your wedding, we do ask that you, your bridal party and your family be mindful that you are being married in the Catholic Church. **Therefore, the fashionable style of shoulder bare dresses, for the bride, brides' maids, and family members, while acceptable for the reception, should be accompanied with a shawl or lace shoulder cape for the Mass/Ceremony.**
6. The wedding party and all those participating in the Mass/Ceremony are asked to be on time for both the rehearsal and the wedding. Please dress appropriately for the rehearsal, business casual dress is quite appropriate. Bring the following to the rehearsal: ♦ civil marriage license, ♦ church offering, ♦ two \$10.00 bills, one for each altar server.
7. There will be several fees associated with the planning of your wedding.
 - Fees associated with the musicians will be coordinated with the parish approved musician, please see #10.
 - Each couple is asked to make a donation to the Church on the occasion of their wedding.
 - The established donation to the Church is \$300.00 for parishioners and \$500.00 for non-parishioners payable to The Co-Cathedral of St Robert Bellarmine and returned in the envelope provided.
 - This donation can be made any time before the wedding date.
 - If you would like to give a gift to the priest/deacon that has worked with you, please do that separately by making the check payable to the priest/deacon.
8. Arrangements will be made in the case of financial concerns.
9. Weddings may be scheduled on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. Friday weddings after 12 p.m. to be discussed with the priest or deacon. Saturday weddings are scheduled at 12 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. and must be out of the Church by 4:00 p.m. due to the 4:30 Mass. Sunday weddings with permission of the Pastor are always scheduled at 3:00 p.m. Again the couple must be out of Church by 4:30 so that preparation for the 5:00 p.m. Mass may take place. Please respect the need for quiet in the church and keep voices to a minimum.
10. **The parish approved musicians are as followed: Organists and Vocalist are: Parish Cantor/Soloist: Renee Weber: 732-492-1564 reneecweber@yahoo.com Diane Testa: 848-888-3098 IM4HYMN@aol.com; Organist only: Janus: 732-345-1360 choir0302@yahoo.com Robert Stasiak: 732-409-6514/ 732-943-3349 bstasiak28@aol.com Harpist, Kristen Redding, 732-687-2590 (kristenredding99@gmail.com).**

11. All fees for musicians will be agreed upon through the musician you selected. The use of musicians from outside the parish must be approved by the pastor of St. Robert Bellarmine. Please contact the parish approved musician to set up your meeting to discuss and plan the music for your wedding.

12. **Please be mindful that only liturgical music may be used during the celebration of the wedding, and final approval of any music requested will be made by the priest/deacon.** The Nuptial Mass and the Nuptial Ceremony are Sacramental celebrations, therefore, proper liturgical directives will be observed: Those parts of the liturgy that are to be sung will be sung: the Psalm Response, the Gospel Acclamation, Sanctus, Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen, Lamb of God, Communion Song.

13. All couples are asked to be mindful that the Church is a place of worship. Therefore we ask you to follow these guidelines in designing the environment for your wedding:
 - a. The use of pew bows is permitted as long as they are tied onto the pews. No tape may be used.

 - b. **Nothing may be put on the pews that will prevent the faithful from entering or leaving the pews from the center aisle. No tulle draping on the pews!**

 - b. Candelabras among the pews are not permitted. Candelabras in the pews may cause a distraction or a fire hazard. Candelabras may be used in the Sanctuary. Please have the florist pick up the candelabras after the wedding. The Church will not be responsible for items left in the Church after your wedding.

 - c. **No bridal carpets! The floors of Saint Robert make such carpets dangerous to walk on.**

 - e. Throughout the Liturgical Year there will be changes to the environment of the Sanctuary and Gathering area of the Church. These changes may be very dramatic, especially during seasons of Lent, Advent, Easter and Christmas. Couples that are thinking about being married during these Liturgical Seasons should be mindful of this, and know that the environment in the Church/Gathering Space will not be altered. **It is understood, that nothing will be removed or moved.**

 - f. The parish of Saint Robert rejoices with you and your family as you prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage. But the life of the parish continues around the special liturgical events each year. During certain times of the year scheduling for use of the church can become very complicated. We ask that couples be flexible with their scheduling of

rehearsals. Therefore, the preferred time for a rehearsal is the day before the wedding. We ask that in planning your rehearsal you and the priest/deacon check with the parish office to ensure that there are no scheduling conflicts.

- g. **Rice, bird seed, confetti or flower pedals are not permitted to be thrown after the wedding.** It has been the experience of the Church that guests to the wedding and parishioners attending Mass after the wedding have fallen due to the throwing of rice and bird seed. The use of confetti and pedals causes a mess for those attending Mass after the wedding. Our suggestion is to encourage your guests to use bells, bubbles, prayers and good wishes as you leave the Church.

14. The Liturgical Year of the Roman Catholic Church does have directives on which Masses may be celebrated on particular days. Couples selecting a day should be aware of those days when the Mass for Matrimony may not be celebrated. Those Liturgical Days when the Nuptial Mass cannot be celebrated are:

- Sundays of Advent
- Ash Wednesday
- Sundays of Lent
- Palm/Passion Sunday (No weddings)
- Holy Week (No weddings)
- Sacred Triduum (weddings are prohibited)
- The Octave of Easter
- Sundays of Easter
- Holy Days of Obligation & Solemnities
- All Souls (No weddings)

Although weddings may be celebrated during the Season of Lent the couple should know that the special penitential character of the Season should be observed and recognized: couples should refrain from too much pomp or display. Families should also be reminded that Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence, which means No meat products may be eaten.

15. As you prepare for the Sacrament of Matrimony, each couple will be expected to fulfill the following:

- Catholics will be asked to present a **NEW** Baptismal Certificate. Please make sure these certificates have been issued within six (6) months after the couple met with the priest or deacon.
- The date of their Confirmation.
- Christians of other Traditions will be asked to provide evidence of their baptism.
- Couples may be asked to have their families fill out a document that verify their freedom to married.

- All couples will be asked to sign up for Pre-Cana. Although we have a wonderful Pre-Cana Team here at St. Robert, registration is through the Diocese of Trenton: www.dioceseoftrenton.org/precana
- Each couple will be asked to participate in FOCCUS. A representative from the parish staff will contact you to assist you with the FOCCUS Inventory. This is not a compatibility test. It is designed to identify areas of effective communication and areas where communication is needed.

16. Please make time to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation before the wedding.

Confessions are heard each Saturday after the 9:00 a.m. Mass and after the 4:30 p.m. Mass; or by appointment with one of the parish priests. All Catholic members of the Bridal Party are encouraged to go to Confession prior to the wedding. **The priest may have another appointment immediately following the rehearsal, which will prohibit sufficient time for Confession.**

17. Please ask your photographer/videographer to see the priest/deacon 20 minutes before the wedding Mass/Ceremony to review photography and videography procedures and where these professionals will stand. The Church is very well lighted so no spotlights or flashes are needed or permitted.

18. Lighting the Unity Candle is not a liturgical rite in the Order of Celebrating Matrimony. The principle symbol of unity is the exchange of vows and rings. Therefore, the lighting of the Unity Candle will not be part of the celebration of Marriage at St. Robert. Upon request a Table Prayer, to be used with the Unity Candle, (if a couple chooses to use one) will be provided to the couple for use at the reception.

19. The use of Drones on church and school property or within the building of the church is strictly prohibited. This includes the use of a drone to film the arrival and departure at the church.

20. Please remind your car service that alcohol may not be served on church grounds. The custom of the couple drinking a champagne toast after the ceremony may be held in the limousine, not outside of the car in front of the church. Drivers will be told by parish staff to put the alcohol away.

Approved August, 2018