

# Saint Vincent de Paul Parish

Marriage Preparation and Wedding Policies

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Congratulations on your engagement!

*The outpouring of love in the new covenant of grace  
is symbolized in the marriage covenant  
that seals the love of husband and wife  
and reflects your divine plan of love.*

Wedding Mass Preface II

The decision you have made to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage is a great gift to yourselves, your families, friends, and the Christian community. Marriage is a public witness that symbolizes and expresses the bond between God and humanity. It is a sacrament of vocation that brings challenge, joy, and blessing to everyone.

Roman Catholic theology teaches that the bride and groom are the actual ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage. The exchange of consent and life-long vows is witnessed by the priest or deacon on behalf of the church. Marriage preparation is intended to assist the bride and groom in every way possible as they assume their ministerial role in the Christian community.

The following information is intended to help as you plan and prepare for your wedding at Saint Vincent de Paul Parish. The basic preparation steps are also required if you plan on having your wedding elsewhere but wish to participate in marriage preparation through Saint Vincent's. While each wedding is unique, there are also logistical guidelines and parish customs that will be included in your marriage planning and preparation.

## Who Can Be Married at Saint Vincent's?

- ❖ Saint Vincent's requires that the bride, the groom, or both, be registered parishioners for four months prior to contacting the Parish Office to discuss wedding dates and preparation.
- ❖ Saint Vincent's also welcomes DePaul University faculty, staff, students, and alumni weddings provided either the bride, groom, or both are Roman Catholic and actively engaged in the practice of their faith.
- ❖ Any previous marriages must be resolved by a declaration of nullity before we can discuss marriage at St. Vincent. **This applies to Catholics and non-Catholics, as well as marriages performed outside of the Catholic Church.**

## Marriage Preparation Steps

- ❖ The first step is to contact Mary Carter ([mcarte40@depaul.edu](mailto:mcarte40@depaul.edu) or 773-325-8613) at the Office of the Pastor to discuss available wedding dates. We celebrate weddings on *Saturdays only* at either 1:00 p.m. or 3:00 p.m. as available. Weddings are usually scheduled a year to a year and half in advance. Only the Office of the Pastor can confirm your wedding date.
- ❖ You and your fiancé will need to obtain **new, currently** dated copies of your baptismal certificates with notations from the parishes where you were baptized. This is standard practice and the parishes will know what is needed. If one of you is not Catholic but is Christian, please make a copy of the certificate or letter that verifies your Christian baptism. You can have these sent directly to the pastor c/o Saint Vincent de Paul Parish. If either the bride or groom is not Christian or baptized, a dispensation will be required. The priest or deacon arranging your marriage can explain this process.
- ❖ You and your fiancé need to complete a Pre-Cana marriage preparation workshop. This is a one day workshop offered by the Archdiocese of Chicago. All details and registration can be found at <https://pvm.archchicago.org/virtual-precana>
- ❖ The workshops take place at many sites and on a variety of dates so you should find something that works with your schedules. Simply choose the workshop or weekend retreat that works best for you and your schedule. Plan on attending a Pre-Cana session about 6 months before your wedding.
- ❖ Following Pre-Cana, there is an online marriage preparation instrument called the Catholic Couple Checkup that you and your fiancé need to complete. The results are sent to Mary for your wedding file. Mary will send you the link to register for the survey once you send her your certificate of completion for the Pre-Cana workshop. Plan on completing the survey approximately 4 months before your wedding.
- ❖ Saint Vincent's handles all of the music planning for weddings. Robert Beatty is the Director of Music and is very easy to work with. We offer a wide variety of options so you should have no problem planning music that helps enhance your wedding. Fees for musicians are separate from the fee requested by the church. Robert's contact information is: [rbeatty1@depaul.edu](mailto:rbeatty1@depaul.edu)
- ❖ In addition to these steps, you will meet 2-3 times with the priest witnessing your wedding to complete the necessary paperwork, discuss what marriage means in the Catholic tradition, and walk through Saint Vincent's guidelines and the wedding liturgy itself. These meetings generally last approximately 1 hour.



## Logistics and Policies

- ❖ Our church is a sacred space and all policies are designed to ensure that we honor it in that way. A marriage is a liturgical celebration and as such all inclusions in a wedding ceremony must appropriately fit the occasion.
  
- ❖ Your wedding rehearsal will take place on Friday evening before the wedding. For a **1:00 p.m.** wedding, the rehearsal is **5:30 p.m.** the evening before. For a **3:00 p.m.** wedding, the rehearsal is **6:30 p.m.** Please arrive on time and emphasize to your wedding party and families that it is very important to begin on time.
  
- ❖ Please bring your marriage license and its return envelope to your wedding rehearsal. We also request that you bring checks for the various fees to the second meeting with your priest or deacon. The church fee balance, and musician fees are due before your wedding ceremony. Music fees vary depending on what you select with the Director of Music. Presider's and minister's gifts are completely at your discretion.
  
- ❖ You are welcome to leave your wedding programs, unity candle, etc., at the church on the night of your rehearsal.
  
- ❖ If your wedding is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. you may plan on arriving at the church as early as noon. The wedding itself will take approximately 50 minutes. **Please plan on leaving by 2:15 p.m. so that we can prepare for the next wedding.**
  
- ❖ If your wedding is scheduled for 3:00 p.m. you may plan on arriving at the church at 2:30 p.m. Because there is a wedding at 1:00 p.m. we are not able to invite you to arrive earlier than 2:30 p.m. The wedding itself will take approximately 50 minutes. **Please plan on leaving the church by 4:15 p.m. because we begin the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confession in the church at that time.**
  
- ❖ Photographers and videographers are asked to read and sign a contract with guidelines for photography at St. Vincent. It needs to be completed and returned to the Office of the Pastor before the wedding date. Photographers and videographers need to speak to the priest or deacon before the liturgy in order to be clear on where they can and cannot position themselves during the wedding. Your photographer must be completely finished with photographs according to the times mentioned above.
  
- ❖ We do not allow florists' candelabra, bunting or candle pillars of any kind to be used in the church or to be attached to the pews. Saint Vincent's cannot accommodate aisle runners of any kind.

- ❖ Flower petals, both artificial and real, cannot be tossed or thrown inside or outside of the church. Rice, birdseed, confetti, etc., cannot be thrown inside or outside the church. Alternatives such as bubbles have become very common outside the church.
  
- ❖ The church is decorated according to liturgical season. For example, there will be poinsettias during the Christmas season and lilies during the Easter season. All liturgical art, parish displays, furnishings, and decoration remain in place and cannot be removed to accommodate a wedding.
  
- ❖ Pew obstructions, such as streamers or cloth swatches, are not allowed.
  
- ❖ Bows or flower arrangements may be attached to pew ends with cushioned or non-abrasive holders. Tape and metal clamps are not permitted on the woodwork.
  
- ❖ Saint Vincent de Paul offers the sacristy area for the groom's party and a bride's room in the back of church before the wedding. There is no dressing room or changing room so please plan to arrive at the church dressed for the wedding liturgy and ask your wedding party to do the same.
  
- ❖ As a reminder, no alcohol is allowed in St. Vincent church, sacristy or anywhere on our campus before, during or after a rehearsal and wedding.
  
- ❖ Saint Vincent's is an ornate and beautiful church. This makes flower arrangements complicated and costly. Flowers are never allowed to be placed on the altar. Pillars in the sanctuary are strongly discouraged and often do not make an impact because the sanctuary is so large. The best rule of thumb when it comes to flowers is, "less is best." It is worth remembering that your florist and all vendors are working for you and not the other way around so please be cautious about being talked into costly floral arrangements that may not make the impact you expect.
  
- ❖ As mentioned above, **all music planning** is coordinated through Saint Vincent de Paul's Director of Music, Robert Beatty. Music that is traditional to weddings, contains scriptural references that are liturgically appropriate, or selections that are sacred are the norm. Contemporary secular or non-liturgical music is not allowed. All musicians must be hired through Robert Beatty at Saint Vincent's. A minimum of a cantor and accompanist must be hired to play at a wedding. Mariachis and bagpipes are not allowed during a wedding liturgy but may be used for the closing recessional or placed outside of the church to welcome the couple as they leave the building.

- ❖ Eucharist or mass is not included at a wedding in which one of the couple is not Roman Catholic. The sacrament of marriage focuses on the unity the bride and groom are professing publicly so refusing communion to one of the newly married detracts from the theme of union. The absence of Eucharist does not detract from the beauty of the wedding liturgy itself.
  
- ❖ It is **strongly** encouraged that your wedding party consist of no more than five groomsmen and five bridesmaids, which includes a maid/matron of honor, and a best man. If you choose more than 5 per side in your wedding party, the bridesmaids/groomsmen will remain seated in their pews for the exchange of vows.
  
- ❖ Children over 4 years of age are welcome to serve as ring bearers and flower girls if they are old enough to understand their role. We allow no more than 2 ring bearers and 2 flower girls in a bridal party. Children who are included in the wedding procession walk in after the seating of the bride's mother and before the adults in the wedding party. This arrangement prevents any challenges the bride might face if she and her escort are left alone in the back of church with children who become frightened or confused.
  
- ❖ Flower girls may carry flowers only and ring bearers may carry a pillow for the ceremonial (not actual) rings. No signs or other accessories may be used.
  
- ❖ If you have sponsors or padrinos for your wedding, we ask that you have no more than a maximum of 3 couples as part of the entrance procession.