

Non-Parishioner Weddings at Our Mother of Consolation Parish

Each year, the Parish Community at Our Mother of Consolation hosts weddings of couples who are non-parishioners (i.e. not registered in the parish for at least one year). The following Wedding Guidelines are to help non-parishioner couples understand what to expect when making a decision about celebrating your wedding at Our Mother of Consolation. Please carefully read and consider all of the requirements. A minimum of nine (9) months advanced planning and preparation prior to the wedding date is required.

Our Mother of Consolation Parish extends our congratulations on your engagement. We are blessed to have the opportunity to assist you during this sacred time of your life as you prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

Undoubtedly, you have many questions concerning your wedding arrangements. We know that both of you will take an active part in planning the liturgy of your wedding ceremony.

Even more important than the preparations for your wedding day, are the preparations for your marriage. Your wedding day is precisely that – a day; your marriage, however, is a lifetime! When you commit yourselves to each other in Christian Marriage, in accordance with the laws of the Church, you administer a sacrament to each other. Marriage enables you to be a source of Divine Love, flowing from your love for each other and into the lives of your family. The sacred words and gestures of your wedding are the beginning of a great ministry of life-giving love, based on the Gospel, and dependent on the power of God's grace at work within you to live your Sacrament always.

May this time of preparation for marriage be one of deepening love and understanding in your relationship with each other and with God. It is our hope that the following information will be helpful in preparing for the celebration of your life together in Christ.

PARISH REQUIREMENTS

Letter of Permission: Since you are not a member of OMC parish, each of you are expected to present a letter from your home parish stating that you are registered and actively practicing your faith.

Scheduling your wedding: After you have obtained your letters, please call the Director of Parish Services (215-247-0430) for possible wedding dates and times; additional information will be taken at this time. The pastor will contact you to make an appointment; please bring the letters from your parishes to this meeting. Ordinarily, we only host two non-parishioner weddings a month. In addition, we do not celebrate weddings during the Season of Lent. Weddings are scheduled for Fridays 5-7 pm and Saturdays 10 am-2 pm.

Priest/Presider: Your parish priest, or a priest who is a relative/friend, is expected prepare you for marriage and to officiate at the wedding ceremony. Ordinarily, the parish does not provide a priest for non-parishioner weddings. Please have the contact information (full name, address and phone number) of the Priest when you make your initial inquiry to the parish. Church law requires that this visiting priest be authorized by the OMC pastor to preside at your wedding and, as a condition for delegation, he must have his bishop/superior attest in writing that he is a priest/deacon in good standing. A deacon relative/friend may assist at the celebration, but the priest receives the vows. In addition, OMC will send the visiting priest a verification form, which stipulates his responsibilities. The wedding is not confirmed

until the priest signs and returns this form. We expect any visiting priest to follow OMC's requirements and practices contained herein. The gift or stipend to the priest is additional and offered at your discretion.

CHURCH & CIVIL REQUIREMENTS

Baptismal Certificates: [dated no more than six (6) months prior to wedding]: If you are a baptized Catholic, you should contact the parish where you were baptized and ask for a certification of your Baptism that is dated no more than six months before your planned wedding. That parish will be familiar with this sort of request and should be able to send you the document within a couple of days. When you receive the certificate, forward it promptly to the priest who is preparing you for your wedding.

Pre-Cana Program: In addition to your preparation with the priest, the Archdiocese requires all couples preparing for marriage to attend a Pre-Cana preparation program. There are a variety of programs available, including several programs offered through the Archdiocesan Family Life Office (www.archphila.org), e.g., Pre-Cana, Engaged Encounter; OMC does not offer a parish-based preparation program. The priest who is preparing you will provide you with information regarding these approved programs. You must make your own arrangements to participate in one of these programs. You are welcome to attend sessions most convenient to your schedule. Please give a copy of the Pre-Cana certificate to the priest handling your marriage preparation.

Pre-Nuptial Investigation & Dispensation: The priest preparing you for marriage completes the Pre-Nuptial investigation. It consists of an interview and the obtaining of "witness testimony" by someone who can testify to your readiness to enter into the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. The Catholic Church law has requirements that must be met before any wedding is valid and lawful. These requirements are designed to protect the high value that the Church has for Christian marriage.

If a couple who desires a Catholic marriage cannot meet any one of these requirements, the couple may have to obtain a dispensation, or exception, to the requirements. For instance, if a Catholic wishes to marry a person of another faith, the Catholic must request a dispensation from the local bishop. As part of the request, the Catholic party to such a marriage reaffirms his/her commitment to the Catholic faith and his/her intention to remain in that faith, and promises to do what he/she can short of causing harm to the marriage relationship to raise any children of the marriage as members of the Catholic community. If you need a dispensation, you must obtain the dispensation before your wedding can take place. The priest who is preparing you for your wedding will determine whether you need any dispensation and, if so, he will make the request on your behalf.

If you were married previously, a *Declaration of Nullity* must be provided at the time of your inquiry in order to demonstrate that you are now free to re-marry in the Catholic Church. This applies to all forms of previous marriage, whether by a judge, by a religious leader in another faith tradition, or by common law.

Witness Testimony: As part of the preparation process, the priest will ask you to provide two written declarations by two different witnesses that you are free to marry your intended spouse. The priest will give you forms to use for this purpose. The witnesses should be members of your immediate family or other persons who have known you well through your adult years. The witnesses need not be Catholic; the declaration is signed by the witness and needs to be attested to by a Catholic priest/deacon at any convenient rectory location. Please note the inter-diocesan procedure on the bottom of the form, if that applies.

Marriage License: It is your responsibility to obtain the civil license no more than two months (60 days) before your wedding date. Please give the marriage license to the priest as soon as you obtain it for safekeeping. The parish will submit the license to the State in accordance with state law. A duplicate of the signed document will be given to you after the wedding.

MUSIC

The dignity of the marriage ceremony requires music that is sacred and ritually appropriate. Many different forms of music and musical accompaniment can be worthy of this task. The parish employs several liturgical musicians & cantors; therefore, ordinarily, no outside musicians are permitted to play during weddings. Instrumentalists (trumpet, harp, violin, flute, etc.) are also available for hire through the Parish Director of Worship (215-247-0430). The couple is responsible for contacting one of the parish musicians to make arrangements for your wedding.

The Church keeps no official list of “approved” wedding music, but it does offer three criteria for liturgical music that can be applied to your choice of wedding music.

Is it prayerful? The purpose of any Catholic liturgy, including a wedding liturgy, is to give glory to God and to sanctify (make holy) the worshipers. Your wedding music should reflect that purpose; in other words, it should help the assembly to pray and to give thanks to God for your marriage. The criteria of prayerfulness is one reason why popular music—including some of the “classic” wedding marches taken from secular operas—is often not permitted.

Is it accessible? In other words, will the assembly be able to sing along? In Catholic worship, the assembly (everyone attending the wedding) is not an audience, passively watching events unfold at the altar. Catholic liturgy calls on the assembly to actively participate in the prayer of the Church, including its sung prayer. Doing so is one of the most powerful ways your friends and family can express their love and support for you and your spouse.

Is it beautiful? Beauty is a window onto the divine (*Catechism #32*), so it is not surprising that the Church calls for the music used in its worship to be beautiful. This criteria is obviously somewhat subjective, depending on personal tastes and local culture. Whether your music is beautiful or not may depend less on the particular selection than on the skill of the musicians who sing or play it. A hymn that seemed ho-hum the first time you heard it in church might have great potential in the right hands.

WEDDING TIMES (Only one wedding is schedule per weekend)

Friday: 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
Saturday: 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

The Saturday Vigil Mass is 4:30 PM.

All wedding-related activities are expected to be completed by 4:00 PM.

FEES

Wedding Fee: \$1200 (full payment confirms booking of wedding) - Our Mother of Consolation is a vital parish community providing for the spiritual and ministerial needs of its parishioners and the surrounding community. It is a jewel-like setting for your wedding day, the heart of your faith life, the center for liturgical celebrations and the sacraments. The wedding fee assists in covering the expenses incurred by the parish for your wedding day, maintenance & upkeep of the historic church building and grounds, heat and air conditioning, and priest/staff time needed to prepare the many aspects of your wedding. Please note: In the event of snow, you will be invoiced for snow removal.

Musician Fees: Fees vary and are negotiated with each musician. Checks are made payable to each musician and are given directly to the musician.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Please remind your photographer/videographer to retain a sacred presence at your wedding ceremony. We ask that your photographer not be in the sanctuary. She/he is free to take pictures from the choir loft or from the body of the church. If you are having pictures taken in the church after the ceremony, please remember another Church event may be scheduled. Please check with the Parish Office for availability.

WORSHIP AIDS (Wedding Booklets)

A worship aid can assist your guest to participate in your wedding. Since the preparation and printing of a worship aid is the couple's responsibility, you are asked to coordinate your worship aid with the priest & music minister before printing. It is necessary to secure copyright permission if you include words to hymns. Copyright permissions are easily obtained at www.onelicense.net. Sample worship aids are available from the parish office.

FLOWERS

In planning your floral arrangements, please follow these two guidelines:

- *Keep the focus on the wedding liturgy.* The prayers of the Church for your marriage are the key element in your wedding; you don't want to distract from the words and actions of the liturgy with flowers that block the assembly's view or get in the way of people involved in the wedding. Flowers are never placed on the altar.
- *Respect the church environment.* Most parishes carefully plan the "environment" of their worship space, following guidelines established by the Vatican and the national or regional bishops' conference. There are statues, candles, and/or seasonal arrangements in place; these should not be altered or moved. The environment changes according to the seasons of the liturgical year; ask parish staff how the church is likely to be decorated at the time of your wedding.

Please contact the parish office with the name & phone number of your florist. In addition, please let the parish know the floral arrangements you are considering before you finalize the arrangements with your florist. It is customary that the flowers remain in the Church after the wedding. Delivery times are scheduled 1 ½ hrs prior to the wedding

If you are using bows or pew arrangements, please secure them to the pews with pipe cleaners or ribbons (no clamps or tape). Please designate someone to remove the bows or pew arrangements following your ceremony.

Some couples save money on decorations by planning their wedding to coincide with a time or season when the church will receive some "extra" decoration. Our parish is beautifully decorated during the Advent, Christmas & Easter seasons.

SYMBOLIC/RITUAL ACTIONS

The Unity Candle or any other symbolic actions representing the joining of the couple in the Sacrament are not used, unless they are part of your cultural heritage. The primary ritual action of your wedding ceremony is the exchange of vows. It is vital for the integrity of the Sacrament of Matrimony that we do not allow other symbolic actions to diminish the exchange of vows. Couples may choose to light the Unity Candle for the blessing at the reception.

AISLE RUNNERS

Since the main aisle of the church is carpeted, a runner is not used. Such runners can pose a slipping danger.

CONFETTI, RICE, BIRDSEED, PETALS

We ask that you do not use confetti, rice, birdseed and flower petals as they can create a hazard on the steps & pavement outside of church possibly causing your guests to slip. Thank you for understanding.

FAQs:

Number of pews:	26 (3 short in front - 23 long)
Accessibility:	A ramp is located on the left side of church Sound amplification system available for the hearing impaired
Church aisle:	100 ft. long
Outside railings:	6 ½ ft long
Rehearsal:	Thursday or Friday between 5:00 & 7:00 PM Doors will be open a half-hour before your scheduled time
Church Address:	11 E. Chestnut Hill Avenue - Philadelphia, PA 19118

For detailed information on planning a Catholic wedding, click on the link below

