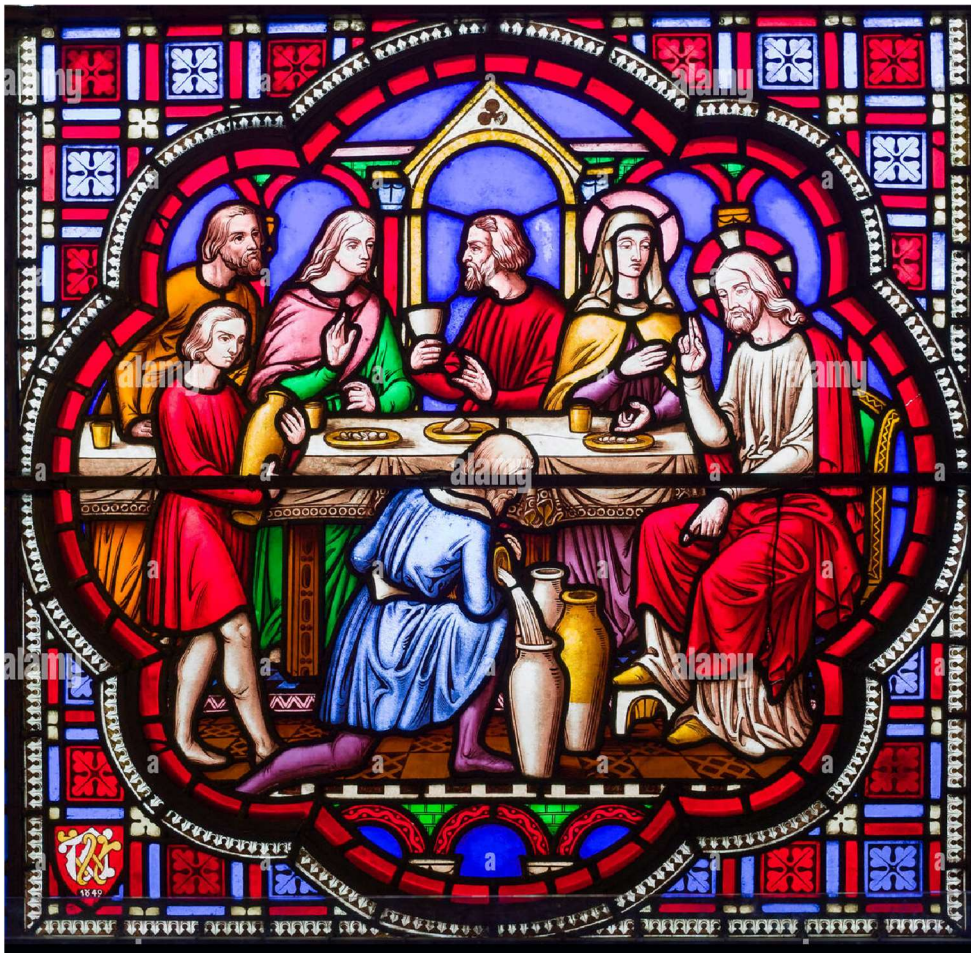


St. Agnes and St. Rose of Lima Wedding Guidelines



Marriage at Saint Agnes or Saint Rose Churches

Welcome to St. Rose of Lima in Topsfield and St. Agnes in Middleton. If you have found your way here, then you are likely considering having your wedding at one of our churches. Let us take this opportunity to congratulate you on your engagement! This is truly an exciting time for the both of you and we are here to help guide you through the process of having your wedding in the Catholic Church. Marriage is a vocational sacrament where a husband and wife vow before God to live their lives for each other, and for others. It participates in the love of Christ because as Christ gave up his life for his Bride, the Church, a husband and wife are called to give up their lives in an analogous way for each other. Marriage is a mystical foreshadowing of Christ and his Church. In the process of marriage preparation, we seek to help couples appreciate the mystery of love into which they enter, and to celebrate the beauty of that mystery!



Your Wedding Date and Time

Even more important than choosing a reception venue or even a date is the preparation for a life of marriage. Our marriage preparation program is intended to help you grow in your relationship with each other so that you have a long and happy marriage. We will reserve a date for you, but it is not fully confirmed until all parish and diocesan requirements have been fulfilled and all fees paid.

Weddings are scheduled with respect to the couple's wishes and subject to the availability of the church. St. Rose seats 250 comfortably but can hold up to 300 people. St. Agnes seats 150 comfortably with a maximum capacity of 175.

Most couples typically schedule weddings on the weekend, but a Catholic wedding can take place on almost any day, provided the church building and priest or deacon are available. There are some days of the year that churches do not have weddings, such as during part of Holy Week. The available times for a wedding on the weekend (restricted by the current Mass schedule) is the following:

Saint Rose Church: Saturday wedding start time: 10:00 am- 2:00 pm (If a couple has a visiting priest or deacon witness their marriage, a start time as late as 4:00 pm is possible) Sunday wedding start time: 1:00pm-4:00pm

Saint Agnes Church: Saturday wedding start time: 10:00 am- 2:00pm (If a couple has a visiting priest or deacon witness their marriage, a start time of 6:00pm is possible)

All weddings have a time slot of one hour. The above indicated available times are start times. The Church is available for one hour from the scheduled start time. If a wedding is late in starting, and there is not sufficient time to complete the wedding within the hour time slot, it may need to be postponed to a different time or day. These time restrictions are based on our need to work wedding ceremonies and Masses around the current weekend Mass schedule of our parishes, and the needs of the engaged couples, based on one priest being available, and we thank you in advance for your understanding.

Nuptial Mass or Wedding Ceremony

When two Catholics get married, it is advisable that they get married in the context of the celebration of Mass. Sometimes, a couple, in consultation with the priest preparing them, will decide that it is necessary instead to have a ceremony without the celebration of the Eucharist. This decision is made based on a number of factors and should not really be determined by the length of time a Mass or ceremony takes. Typically, a ceremony or Mass will take between 30-45 minutes. For couples who have differing religions, it is usually advisable to have a wedding ceremony, instead of a wedding Mass. This is something that should be discussed with the priest who is preparing you to be married and should never become a source of stress or difficulty.

May I have a guest priest come and witness my marriage at your church?

If you have a Catholic priest in mind that you would like to perform your wedding, they are welcome to celebrate your wedding at St. Rose or St. Agnes. They should contact us to work out the details, and to obtain official permission from the Pastor, and the Archdiocese of Boston, if they are from another Diocese. If they do not live in Massachusetts, the State of Massachusetts will require them to obtain permission to legally sign your marriage license.



Floral Arrangements and Decorations



We welcome your floral adornments to further beautify the church for your wedding. Please consider these arrangements as an offering to God's church and as such, feel welcome to leave them on the altar as a sign of your appreciation and joy. Please note that if you do plan your wedding during a special liturgical season such as Advent/Christmas (late November/December), Lent/Easter (end of February, March, April), the sanctuaries are enhanced with seasonal arrangements which cannot be altered or removed.

Additionally:

- Pew decorations are permitted but nothing may be taped or pinned to the pews. Your florist will be able to suggest an alternate method. For your reference, there are 16 pews per side at Saint Rose and 12 pews per side in Saint Agnes.
- Additional items or props such as Unity Candles, not related to the Catholic ceremony, are not permitted. We encourage you to use those at your reception instead.
- Throwing rice or bird seed is prohibited on church property. You may throw flowers or blow bubbles at the newly-wed couple.



Photography and Videography

Photographers and Videographers are welcome at your wedding, under specific restrictions, which will help provide for a smooth, reverent celebration of your wedding, while capturing it on video or by photo. All videographers and photographers must contact the priest prior to the wedding to go over the ground rules. St. Rose Church has livestream capabilities which can be used to record your wedding Mass or Ceremony. If you would like this, you need to let us know.

Music at Your Wedding

The U. S. Bishops, in their document, "Music in Catholic Worship," have stressed the importance of music at wedding liturgies. It states that the music and its text be appropriate for the wedding liturgy and be used in the proper places. It asks that you look at your music in terms of its power to enable the people who will be present to express their faith. Music must be liturgical music.

All arrangements for your wedding music must be planned through the respective parish music directors. Susan Frontera is your contact at St. Rose and Jay and Laura Pawlyk are your contacts for weddings at St. Agnes. They can assist you in learning the various music pieces available for your wedding Mass or Ceremony.

Church Wedding Fees

The Church Offering and Fee for actively-contributing, registered parishioners to have their wedding at the Saint Rose or Saint Agnes Church is \$500.00 due at the time of booking. The Church Offering and Fee for non-parishioners is \$1500.00, with a nonrefundable \$500.00 deposit at booking, with the balance due two months prior to the wedding date. This Church Offering and Fee includes the use of the Church, organist (pianist), vocalist, wedding coordinator (rehearsal and wedding day), and associated fees. On the day of your wedding, it is customary to offer a "tip" to the youth Altar Server who serves your wedding Mass, if one does so.

Meaning & Importance of the Vows of Marriage

One of the essential aspects of marriage is the exchange of consent between the man and woman, also known as the Vows. Marriage is a unique sacrament in the Church because it is the only sacrament where the couple getting married are themselves the ministers of the sacrament. The priest or deacon is a witness to the vows (consent), and acts as the representative of the Church in receiving the vows. The exchange of vows is integral to the couple becoming married.

Since your vows are what you promise to each other for the rest of your lives, a lot of the wedding preparation for couples is geared toward an appreciation of the meaning of the vows.



Wedding Coordinator

The wedding coordinator will organize your wedding rehearsal so that everybody knows what to do during the Church wedding. The Couple, their parents, their wedding party, and those doing the readings (if any) should attend the rehearsal. The rehearsal is run either by the wedding coordinator or by the priest. Your contact at St. Rose is Dorothy Arathuzik and your wedding coordinator at St. Agnes is Scott Saulnier.

Wedding Programs

Programs are a lovely addition to any ceremony, as it allows guest unfamiliar with the Catholic Mass or traditions to follow along with the order of the ceremony. We ask that you keep them tasteful and aligned with the sacred occasion that is your wedding. There are samples available on our website to help you create programs for your special day.



Process of having your wedding at St. Rose or St. Agnes Church

To be married at St. Rose or St. Agnes Church, you will work with a priest to guide you in the preparation for your married life and wedding day. While the priest guiding you on your marriage preparation will walk you through the steps of the process, here are the few main parts of your marriage preparation:

- **Meet with a priest to conduct a marriage interview.** You will also need to plan on having 2 to 3 additional meetings with the priest preparing you for marriage at various steps in your wedding preparation.
- **Obtain your baptismal certificates from the church at which you were baptized.** Let the parish where you were baptized know that you need a “certificate of baptism with notations” sent directly to St. Rose and St. Agnes Parish Offices at 22 Boston St., Middleton, MA 01949
- **Attend a Marriage Preparation Program (Pre-Cana program.)** In the Archdiocese of Boston, the Pre-Cana program is called “Transformed in Love”. The current offerings for this program can be found at:
<https://www.bostoncatholic.org/familylife/transformedinlove>

We recommend completing this program in the earlier part of your wedding preparations so that you can focus on this weekend and your relationship without having to worry as much about preparing for your wedding day.

- **Attend a NFP (Natural Family Planning) informational session with a licensed NFP instructor.** The Archdiocese has a list of instructors here:
<https://www.bostoncatholic.org/sites/g/files/zjfyce871/files/202202/NFP%20Instructor%20list%202022.pdf>

The priest working with you can give you a recommended NFP instructor.

- **Obtain a marriage license from the State of Massachusetts.** You may obtain this license from any city or town in Massachusetts. You both appear in person, bring a document with proof of your age and your social security number. There is a three-day waiting period to get the license and it is good for 60 days. About a month before the wedding is a good time to get the license. For more

information, visit the Massachusetts website at:

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/getting-married-in-massachusetts-before-the-...>

If you are already civilly married and want to have your marriage blessed within the Church, then you should provide a certified copy (with an official seal) of your marriage certificate from the state where you were married. You can request that from the city or town where you filed for your civil wedding.

- **Schedule a rehearsal date and time.** This is typically held the day prior to the wedding.

*Important note: If you are currently residing outside of the Archdiocese of Boston, you can do your wedding preparation with a priest at your local parish. In this case, please explain this when you speak with the priest on your first call so that we can give you further specific instructions on your wedding preparations.



Links you might enjoy

For Catholics, family life and the home, established through the institution of marriage, is called the Domestic Church. Marriage is a grace upon which God has established our societies, and which enables us to learn to love, and live in unity. Here, you will find a few resources you might find helpful when thinking about marriage and the mystery of love into which you are being called.

<https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/new-evangelization>

<https://www.foryourmarriage.org/blogs/marriage-and-the-new-evangelization/>

<https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2020/01/church-needs-evangelizing-spouses-to-fulfill-itsmission-pope-says>

<https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/cate...>