

Church of St. Vincent Ferrer

Wedding Policy



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www.svsc.info

The Church of St. Vincent Ferrer is in great demand for weddings. Consequently, we must limit them to couples that have some kind of personal connection to the parish, namely:

- Registered parish members who attend Mass and contribute regularly, and Catholics who live in the parish's territory.
- Catholics who have attended the parish school.
- Catholics whose families belong, or have belonged, to the parish.

We will also consider requests from the following:

- Catholics who work in the parish neighborhood.
- Graduates of Providence College.
- Persons who are related to the parish staff or employees.

As a rule, the Church of St. Vincent Ferrer will not accept weddings of persons who approach us simply because we offer a beautiful setting for their ceremony or because we are convenient to their reception hall.

Arranging your Wedding

The Archdiocese of New York, to which St. Vincent Ferrer Parish belongs, requires that couples notify the parish **at least six months** before their planned date. Please call the parish office (212-744-2080) and ask to speak with one of the priests to begin making arrangements.

Date and Time of the Celebration

Weddings may take place on almost any day of the year, except on those few days when they are not permitted by Church law. If the wedding is to be celebrated during Advent or Lent, we ask the couple to keep in mind the special character of these liturgical seasons.

Normally, the following times are free on Saturdays: 10:00 am, 12:00 pm, 2:00 pm, and 4:00 pm.

To reserve a date, the parish asks for a \$100.00 non-refundable deposit. Checks should be made out to "St. Vincent Ferrer Church."

If after having scheduled your wedding you must cancel or change the date and/or time, please contact the priest immediately.

And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy.
Hosea 2:19

Cost of the Wedding

Inspired by the scriptural principle of tithing the first portion to God, couples may consider a gift of 10% of the cost of their wedding expenses as an offering to the Lord. In this spirit, St. Vincent Ferrer requests a minimum offering of

- \$2,200.00

Please note, no parishioner will be denied a wedding if this amount cannot be paid. This figure includes the \$100.00 non-refundable deposit that is required to reserve a date.

As soon as a date for the wedding has been scheduled, contact the Director of Music James Wetzel at jwetzel@svsc.info. Full details of musical policy will be provided by Mr. Wetzel. The standard fee for music at a wedding, which includes an organist and singer, is \$750.00. Hiring additional musicians will incur additional fees, and those will be outlined in your discussion with the Director of Music.

The offering to the church and the music fees should be paid in full, in one check, payable to "St. Vincent Ferrer Church," one month before the wedding takes place. This check should be given or sent to the priest overseeing your wedding preparations.

Small Weddings

There are occasions when a couple would be well-advised to have a simple wedding ceremony – for example, if the couple is elderly; when it is a second marriage for either party; or when the couple is cohabiting. A simple ceremony as such can be held in a beautiful side chapel of the church that accommodates up to 25 people. In cases of small weddings, the parish leaves the amount of the offering to the discretion of the couple. There need be no music at small weddings, though this remains possible to arrange.

Preparations: Instruction & Documents

The priest helping to prepare you for marriage will discuss the various preparatory steps you must take before the wedding.

Instruction

The purpose of this instruction is to help couples understand the Church's doctrine of Christian marriage. Of primary importance to the Church's understanding of this sacrament is the permanence and indissolubility of marriage, as well as the sacred character of human sexuality. This instruction will also promote your readiness to welcome and educate the children born of your union.

- Couples are normally required to attend a **"Pre-Cana" program** conducted by the Archdiocese of New York (or by your home diocese if you are not living in the New York City area). You can sign up for this program on-line by going to the archdiocese's Family Life/Respect Life Office's web site: <http://flrl.org/MarriagePreparation.htm>. You will be offered a number of options to fulfill this requirement.
- The priest preparing you for marriage will want to **meet with you as a couple** to make sure both of you are free to marry as well as discuss other issues related to the nature of marriage and the ceremony.
- The Catholic Church recognizes fertility as a gift to be understood and cooperated with rather than a problem to be solved or, still less, a disease to be controlled. Contraception violates God's wise and loving design for the total self-gift of husband and wife in that contraception ignores, marginalizes, or even suppresses the fertility God gives to each spouse as a gift. Because this understanding of fertility is not shared by the wider culture, it is important for couples to comprehend the Church's teaching on sexual love, to appreciate why it is true, and to learn how it can be lived in married life today. Fertility awareness classes, often called **Natural Family Planning (NFP)**, teach couples to discern and shape their sexual expression of love according to the alternating rhythms of the naturally fertile and non-fertile times of the woman's cycle. Natural Family Planning classes, as well as courses in Natural Procreative Technology (NaPro), which address the morally problematic issue of in vitro fertilization, are offered as a part of "Pre-Cana" instruction. Classes are offered regularly at St. Vincent Ferrer and throughout the archdiocese, and **we strongly urge** all couples to take them. More information can be found online at: www.flrl.org/NaturalFamilyPlanning.htm.

Documents

- **Baptismal certificate dated within six months of the wedding.** To obtain this, contact the church of your baptism. If you are a Catholic, this certificate should also indicate when you received First Communion and Confirmation. If it does not, additional documentation is necessary.
- **Permission to marry outside your parish** is required if you are a Catholic and not a member of St. Vincent Ferrer Parish. This is obtained from the pastor of your parish.
- **Permission from your parents** is required if either of you is under 18 years of age.
- **Affidavits of each party's freedom to marry** must ordinarily be completed. The priest will provide the appropriate form.
- **Certificate of Completion of the Archdiocese of New York's Marriage Preparation Program.**
 - If either party, regardless of religious affiliation, has been previously married, he or she will need either a **death certificate** (if the previous spouse died) or an **ecclesiastical decree of nullity** (in the case of divorce). Copies of these documents, including divorce papers, should be given to the priest.
 - If you are a Catholic who is marrying a baptized non-Catholic (or a non-Christian), you will have to receive **permission** (or a **dispensation**) to do so. This is easily done through the priest who is preparing you for marriage. This permission (or dispensation) is given on the condition that the Catholic party promises to do all he or she can to remain an active Catholic and to raise as Catholics any children born of this union.
- **Completion of the Pre-Marital Investigation Form.** At some point during the preparation, the priest will ask each party formal questions designed to establish that the couple is free to marry in the Church, that the man and woman have a correct understanding of Christian marriage, and that they have the intentions and the ability to fulfill their marriage vows. These questions are printed on a formal document that is signed by each party.
- **Civil marriage license.** The priest will return the signed license to City Hall after the ceremony. Please bring the license to the rehearsal.



Rehearsal

The rehearsal should be scheduled at the same time the wedding date is set. Rehearsals are usually held the evening before the wedding. Everything will go smoothly if the rehearsal starts on time and is attended only by those directly involved in the ceremony. Too large a group often leads to confusion. Since most of the rehearsal is spent organizing the bridal procession, the bride should work out beforehand the order of procession. **At the rehearsal, couples should remit payment of all outstanding fees. They should also bring with them their civil marriage license (with its envelope) and give it to the priest.** After the ceremony, the priest will place his signature on the document and return it to City Hall.

Wedding Ceremony

As the date of your wedding approaches, the priest will discuss with you the specifics of the ceremony.

What Kind of Ceremony

The most significant decision that you will make in this regard is whether to have a **Nuptial Mass or a simple ceremony**. The Mass is recommended when both parties are Catholic, since they can then solemnize their union by receiving Holy Communion together. At ecumenical or inter-faith weddings, on the other hand, a simple ceremony is recommended. Also, you will have the opportunity to choose the readings from a selection of scripture readings, as well as the reader(s) who will proclaim the sacred texts intelligently and appropriately.

Various Issues to Consider Regarding the Ceremony

The use of “**unity candles**” is strongly discouraged. Experience has consistently demonstrated their clumsiness. For instance, they often do not light properly, or they spread wax, or they can even set other decorations on fire. More importantly, the Catholic marriage rite does not allow for such a lighting ceremony. Therefore, if desired, unity candles belong best at the wedding reception, where they can be incorporated into the first dinner blessing of the newly married couple.

Floral decorations should not be extravagant. Our beautiful Gothic church needs little extra ornamentation. The priest will discuss with you the options about where the flowers can be arranged. **Candles** in the body of the church must be enclosed in glass globes.

Due to past experiences, **runners** are no longer permitted.

Please make every effort **to be on time for both the rehearsal and the wedding**. Excessive delays always create tension, and, if the day's schedule of services is tight, they may even necessitate the shortening of your ceremony.

Your guests should not throw anything inside or outside the Church, whether rice, bird seed, confetti, or flower petals.

For the duration of the ceremony, photographers must stay in the nave of the church. Under no conditions will they be allowed to enter the sanctuary. Moreover, when taking pictures, they should not interfere with the liturgy, such as by blocking the procession or by distracting the wedding party. Lighting equipment should not inhibit anyone's view of the ceremony. As a courtesy, all photographers should check in with the officiating priest before beginning their work.

Do not plan on having a reception line in the church or the vestibule after the wedding, as this could interfere with people entering the church for the next event.

Exceptional Circumstances

You may wish to have a priest from outside St. Vincent Ferrer officiate your wedding. Please discuss this with the priest from St. Vincent Ferrer with whom you are working. If you wish to have a clergyperson of another denomination to assist at your wedding, ask the priest whom you are consulting to discuss the possibilities.

Under specific conditions, Catholics who are marrying non-Christians may be permitted to have their wedding ceremony somewhere other than in a Catholic church. If you are contemplating such a wedding, you are welcome to speak about it with one of the priests.

If you are a parishioner who is planning a wedding outside the parish, you should let one of the priests here know and he will be glad to be of assistance. If your marriage preparation will be handled by us, and your paperwork prepared and sent by us through the Archdiocese of New York to the diocese where you will be married, we ask for an offering of \$500 as just compensation for the work involved.

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.
Song of Songs 8:7

Marriage Preparation Checklist

Instruction

- ___ Contacted a priest at Saint Vincent Ferrer
- ___ Registered for the Archdiocese of New York's Marriage Preparation Program
- ___ Registered for a Natural Family Planning class
- ___ Attended follow-up meetings with the priest

Documentation

- ___ Certificate of Baptism dated within 6 months of the wedding (If this certificate does not contain information about First Holy Communion and Confirmation, we will need separate certificates that those sacraments were received.)
- ___ Certificate of Completion of the Archdiocese of New York's Marriage Preparation Program
- ___ Affidavits of Freedom to Marry
- ___ Permission to Marry (given by your pastor if you are not a member of St. Vincent Ferrer Parish)
- ___ Civil Marriage License from New York City

Finances

- ___ Submitted \$100.00 non-refundable deposit upon scheduling a date for the wedding
- ___ Made an offering to the Church for the wedding and paid the musicians' fees

