

# **Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower Our Lady of Mt. Carmel & St. Thérèse Parish**

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## **Wedding Guidelines**

The following guidelines are to help you plan your wedding Mass at the Little Flower Basilica. Please read through each section carefully. If you have any questions in regards to available dates or these guidelines, call the number listed above.

## **Wedding Info**

### Wedding Mass Time Schedule

Saturdays at 12 pm or 2 pm

There are no weddings during Lent or Thanksgiving weekend.

### Stipend

Parishioners: \$500

Non- Parishioners: \$1,000

\*A parishioner is regarded as an individual who has been registered at Little Flower Parish a minimum of one year prior to scheduling their wedding.

### Mixed Marriages

If an individual is not a Catholic, and was baptized in another faith, we require a letter or certificate from that church.

### Guest Priest

If you wish to have a different priest officiate, you must request permission of the Pastor. You are responsible for paying the guest priest stipend directly to him. It is not included in the church stipend for Little Flower.

If you choose to have an outside priest they will need to send Little Flower a Letter of Good standing and we will send a letter of delegation back to them.

It is acceptable to have your meetings with a priest from another parish and/or to have additional music arrangements, however, the stipend remains the same and we require that a letter be sent to us stating that you are receiving marriage preparation through them.

### **Checklist:**

- Guest Priest: Letter of Good Standing
- Marriage Prep: Letter from Priest you are receiving preparation with
- Mixed Marriage: Letter/ Certificate of baptism

## Prior to Scheduling Your Wedding

### Initial Documents Needed

Each couple is responsible for obtaining the following documents:

- a) Updated Baptismal Certificate (Catholics and Non-Catholics) The certificate must have current date and sacramental notations on the reverse side.
- b) First Communion (Catholics only)
- c) Confirmation (Catholics only)
- d) Letter of Permission stating that you are registered and attending regularly and that you have permission to marry in Little Flower Parish from your respective parishes (not necessary if you are registered parishioners at Little Flower).

These records will be kept in your permanent file at Little Flower Parish. We require original documents, not copies.

## Scheduling Your Wedding

If you have chosen to marry at Little Flower, please call (210) 735-9126 ext. 116 to schedule your appointment with the pastor. Contact the parish office before making any other wedding arrangements. You cannot secure a wedding date with the parish secretary. The meeting with the pastor must be scheduled a minimum of six months prior to your wedding date. If you need to reschedule your already scheduled wedding date, you will need to meet with the Pastor, again, to discuss any changes.

Please be aware that you must have the following paperwork with you at the time of your appointment with the Pastor. Your wedding will not be reserved if you are missing any of the following:

- Updated Baptismal certificates.
- Baptism letter/certificate from non-Catholic faith.
- Letter of Permission from respective parishes.
- \$200 deposit (may be given in the form of a check, cash, or credit card). Should you later cancel your wedding, the deposit is non-refundable.
- Please have the names of your witnesses available. (The official witnesses, those that sign the wedding license, are the Maid of Honor and the Best Man. There is not a separate couple chosen for this honor.)

## After Scheduling Your Wedding

1. Contact the wedding coordinator, Thelma Montez (210) 647-8393, as soon as your wedding date and time are arranged with the Pastor.
2. Obtain the book *Together for Life* from the parish secretary, which contains all the liturgy selections for the Mass.
3. Fill out the Selection Sheet provided in the book, *Together for Life*.
4. Call and arrange a meeting with Thelma Montez, at least two months prior to your wedding date to plan your liturgy and music. Please bring your completed *Together for Life* Selection Sheet to the meeting.
5. Thelma Montez will conduct the rehearsal. The Pastor will not be present.

## To Do Before the Wedding

### Required Classes

The Archdiocese of San Antonio requires that all couples who wish to marry within the Catholic Church attend:

- The Archdiocesan Weekend Seminar  
Contact Yolanda Vargas at (210) 433-6301 ext. 302  
We will need a copy of the completion certificate once you receive it.

and

Little Flower Parish requires that all couples take

- Natural Family Planning (NFP) classes  
Call Laura Brill at (210) 379-6135 so she can discuss this with you and advise you on the best course for you to take. Different methods of Natural Family Planning are available.  
We will need a copy of the completion certificate once you receive it.

### Meetings

Each couple is responsible for scheduling two meetings with a priest. Please call the office at (210) 735-9126 ext. 116 to schedule these meetings. The two meetings must conclude at least one month before your wedding date.

### Confession

The pastor requires that the couple (those Catholic) go to confession within one week of their wedding. Please make arrangements to see a priest and make a good confession.

### Stipend

The church stipend may be paid in full or in payments. All payments are made through the parish secretary and a receipt is given upon payment. The final payment, however, must be received no later than a month prior to the wedding date.

### Extra Info

Two hours are set aside on the wedding date for:

- 1/2 hour to decorate pews, set up flowers, etc. (prior to Mass)
- 1 hour of Mass
- 1/2 hour to take photos (after Mass)

### Checklist:

- Contact Thelma Montez
- Fill out Selection Sheet in *Together for Life* book
- Archdiocese Retreat Certificate
- NFP Class Certificate
- Two meetings with priest
- Confession
- Stipend paid in full

## Wedding Ceremony Info

Your wedding is first and foremost a religious celebration rather than a social celebration. Social and cultural customs are not discouraged, as long as they are appropriate and reasonable. Often, most of these customs can be observed at the reception, rather than in the church. Nothing is permitted which is not in accordance with the tradition and the rubric of the liturgy.

### Attendants

The Maid of Honor and Best Man are seated in the sanctuary near the altar with the bride and groom. The remaining wedding party is seated in the pews of the Basilica behind the parents and grandparents.

### Attire

Bride's wedding dress and bride's maids dresses: if they are strapless dresses, they will need to wear something to cover their shoulders within the church, and the neckline needs to be modest.

Semi-formal attire is required by the Pastor for anyone who will be in the sanctuary. This means coat and tie or tuxedo for the men and a dress or slacks for the women, this includes groom's men and bride's maids.

### Church Decorations

- a) Floral arrangements are allowed on the Communion Rail, if desired. The arrangements, however, are not provided by the Basilica and are at your own expense.
- b) Pew decorations are allowed, however, adhesive tape is not allowed to secure them. You may use hooks, elastic or ribbons to hang decorations.
- c) Unity candles are optional and are not provided by the Basilica. The candles are placed on the left side of the altar, or can be placed on a stand or pedestal provided by yourself.
- d) Floor runners are allowed, but are not provided by the Basilica. If you desire to use a runner, the length of the aisle is 114 ft.
- e) The throwing of rice, birdseed, artificial or natural flowers, and the blowing of bubbles are not permitted on Basilica grounds.

### Photographers/ Videographers

All photographers and/ or videographers need to check with the wedding coordinator and/ or the priest before the wedding to make sure what is and is not allowed in the Basilica.

Semi-formal dress is required for photographers/ videographers. They are welcome to come to the rehearsal to speak with the coordinator and witness the Order of the Mass. If you decide to have a professional photographer for your wedding, your family and friends will not need to take any photographs during the Mass.

If you are looking for a photographer for your wedding, the Basilica highly recommends Carlos Ramirez. He can be reached at (210) 262-3555.

You can visit his website for more information: [carlosramirezphotography.com](http://carlosramirezphotography.com)