

**Process for a Villanova alumnus/alumna who wishes to get married  
At St. Thomas of Villanova Parish**

The ordinary place for a Catholic wedding ceremony is the parish church of either the bride or the groom. However, there are extraordinary situations when a wedding takes place in another church. Such a situation might exist when a strong relationship with a particular parish or church develops. This may be a time of significant spiritual growth or even a spiritual awakening for an individual. It is apparent that this often happens to Villanova University graduates, who have spent their undergraduate years growing in their faith. After leaving Villanova it is most appropriate for graduates to become registered and active members of a parish community where they can be challenged to continue their faith development. Needless to say, there are many parishes that need the presence of such young, vibrant individuals of faith.

The church on the campus of Villanova University is the main church of St. Thomas of Villanova Parish, and therefore, it is the place for the parish community to celebrate the sacraments. The general rule in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia is that sacraments cannot be celebrated in university or college chapels. Our church is an exception because it is a parish church that is on a university campus. Weddings therefore, can be celebrated here.

There is a strong and long tradition of Villanova University graduates being married at the church of St. Thomas of Villanova Parish. They had the opportunity, as undergraduates, to fully participate in the spiritual life of the campus by attending Eucharistic celebrations and other spiritual offerings of the Office of Campus Ministry. Cognizant of this tradition and if permission is given by the pastor of their local church, the parish of St. Thomas of Villanova welcomes graduates who wish to have their marriages here. This invitation, however, is limited to graduates who have spent their undergraduate years at Villanova. The experience of Law School graduates and other graduate students is different. Living off campus, they maintain a very different professional lifestyle. It is important to remember that we encourage all graduates to participate in the local parishes where they live, as a way to continue their spiritual development nurtured during their undergraduate years at Villanova University.

The following are the requirements set forth for these weddings. These have been developed, keeping in mind the requirements of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, to make wedding celebrations beautiful and meaningful.

1. Villanova graduates who have spent their undergraduate years at the University are eligible to have their weddings at St. Thomas of Villanova Church.
2. A Parish Wedding Registration Form must be completed by the priest requested to be the presider at the wedding or by the pastor/priest of either the bride/groom's parish. The form can be found on the parish web site: [www.stthomasofvillanova.org](http://www.stthomasofvillanova.org) or can be obtained by calling the wedding coordinator at the parish (610-520-1242). **It should be noted that the parish cannot supply priests to preside for graduate weddings.**
3. A Letter of Permission to marry at St. Thomas of Villanova Parish must be obtained from the pastor of the parish of either the bride or the groom.
4. **The Parish Registration Form** and the **Letter of Permission** must be in the hands of the parish wedding coordinator before a date can be given.
5. A graduate can call for a wedding date 18 months before the date of the wedding.

6. When the two required forms are present, the parish Wedding Coordinator will give the couple a date. An agreement will be sent outlining the parish requirements. This agreement and a check for \$1200.00, made out to St. Thomas of Villanova, should be returned to the Wedding Coordinator within three weeks to confirm the wedding date. The name, address, and phone number of the priest who will preside must be included with the fee.
  
7. There are two wedding times set aside for graduates: 11:30 a.m. and 1:30p.m. on Saturdays. Rehearsals are on Friday evenings: 5:00 p.m. for the 11:30 a.m. wedding and 6:00p.m. for 1:30p.m. wedding.
  - a. The paperwork for the wedding should be done by the priest who is the presider or by a priest in the bride/groom's parish. This paperwork includes the Prenuptial Investigation form, two witness forms for each party, and any necessary dispensations or permissions.
  - b. The wedding coordinator will send the priest the necessary forms after a signed agreement and check are received.
  
8. If the paperwork is done locally (in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia), it should be given by the priest to the parish Wedding Coordinator a month before the wedding date.
  
9. If the paperwork is done by a priest in another diocese, it needs to be sent by the priest to the Chancery Office of his diocese, who in turn will forward it to the Chancery Office of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. They will then send it to the parish.
  
10. Pre-Cana preparation is required by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia
 

The Pre-Cana established by Villanova Campus Ministry is available for alumni couples and the cost is included in the fee. The parish Pre-Cana, Preparing to Live in Love, consisting of seven meetings, spread over several weeks, is also available for alumni. Alumni living outside the Philadelphia area can check the Living In Love website, [www.livinginlove.org](http://www.livinginlove.org), click the Parish Contact list, to see if there is a mentor couple in their area. Other options should be discussed with the Wedding Coordinator.

The Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study (FOCCUS) instrument, as required by the Diocese, must be completed either at the Pre-Cana or with the priest presiding at the wedding.
  
11. All couples need to attend parish liturgical planning sessions. They are scheduled on the Saturday evenings of the Pre-Cana weekends.
  
12. The Parish Wedding Booklet deals with various parish requirements, liturgical and musical preparation, instructions for photographers and videographers and all the other details surrounding the celebration of the sacrament. All weddings taking place in St. Thomas of Villanova Church need to follow these requirements.

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