

Required Church Documents

A Baptismal Certificate

For Catholics, the Baptismal Certificate must be issued from the Church of Baptism no earlier than the date of the initial meeting with the priest. Baptized non-Catholics should request a letter from the church in which they were baptized.

A Confirmation Certificate

For Catholics: A copy of the original certificate is acceptable.

Affidavits of Free Status

The bride and the groom must each submit **two** Affidavits of Free Status. These forms should be completed preferably by relatives (especially parents) or others who have known the bride or groom for a long period of time. These affidavits attest that no impediment exists that would prevent the marriage from taking place. The Church requires these affidavits for the couple's own protection. The witnesses must sign the affidavits in the presence of a priest, deacon, or notary public.

The Certificate of Attendance from a Pre-Cana Conference

Arlington Diocese offers multiple Conferences for Engaged throughout the year. A complete listing and registration information can be found at <https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/family-life/marriage/conferences-for-the-engaged/>

Our Lady of Bethesda Retreat Center offers the *Three to Get Married* program for engaged couples. They offer both virtual and in-person weekend retreats. Information can be found at <https://ourladyofbethesda.org/programs/marriage/virtual-marriage-prep>.

FOCCUS

The couple will answer a 156 (or more) question survey entitled, "Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding, and Study." This survey instrument is not a compatibility test; rather, it raises issues concerning a broad range of areas, like religion, finance, communication, sexuality, and parenting. Information will be provided so that the couple may register online and take the Inventory separately. Results of the Inventory will be sent to the priest who will meet to review the results of the survey during your subsequent meeting.

Previous Marriage (if applicable)

If either party has been previously married, proof of a **Declaration of Nullity** or a certified death certificate must be supplied.

Dispensation for Mixed Marriage (if applicable)

If either party is not Catholic, a Dispensation for Mixed Marriage will be required from the Arlington Diocese Office of Canonical Affairs. **The priest working with you on marriage preparation will submit the application for a Dispensation.**

Wedding License

The couple must obtain a wedding license from a Circuit Court in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The license is valid for 60 days. The couple should present the license to the priest at their last meeting.

Fairfax County Circuit Court:

703.691.7320

Effective March 2020 Marriage Licenses will be prepared and issued online by virtual appointment with the Circuit Court. Go to the Fairfax County Circuit Court website and click on Marriage License. You will be directed to submit a Pre-Application after which you can set up your virtual appointment.