

**Catholic Weddings at non-Catholic Venues or Outdoors**  
**Guidelines for Couples, Wedding Planners, and Venues**  
**Archdiocese of Baltimore**  
**February 2022**

The Archdiocese of Baltimore allows weddings to take place at some approved non-sacred venues and outdoor locations.

In order to request permission, it is important that the engaged couple is in conversation with their local Catholic parish and that the necessary requests are *filed with the Archdiocese of Baltimore at least six but preferably nine months prior to their anticipated wedding date.*

Once a location is approved, it is important for the couple to maintain regular communication with their officiant (Catholic priest or deacon) to ensure everything proceeds smoothly on the wedding day.

The Archdiocese of Baltimore provides the following guidelines to maintain the sacredness of the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage (wedding):

- Weddings outside of a Church should use the Order of Celebrating Matrimony Outside of Mass: <http://www.foryourmarriage.org/rite-for-celebrating-marriage-outside-of-mass/>.
- Plans should include one hour for the wedding.
- There should be an adequate sound system, in order that the officiant can be heard by the congregation.
- With outdoor weddings, care should be taken to ensure that it is a suitable atmosphere for a wedding, including avoiding possible distractions (e.g., noises, animals, boats, etc.).
- Appropriate dress should be maintained by the couple and their wedding party.
- All music *during the wedding ceremony* must be liturgical and performed “live” on the site and may not be “popular” (e.g., not Taylor Swift, Katy Perry, etc.) and approved by the officiant in advance of the wedding.
- Alcohol should not be served before or during the wedding ceremony.
- Food should not be served during the wedding ceremony.
- A room should be made available for the officiant to vest.