How to Get Married in the Catholic Church

For those living outside the Archdiocese of Boston getting married at MIT:

1. As soon as you get engaged, even before deciding on the wedding date, you should consult with a priest in your diocese. The priest will help determine several things under canon law that will be helpful to know even before picking the date (for example). He will help prepare you according to the norms of the diocese where you are living, and then that diocese will send all the relevant paperwork to the Archdiocese of Boston, which will then give permission for you to marry at MIT. An engagement is normally at least six months and the marriage preparation process need take no longer than that.

2. Contact MIT about reserving the chapel: [http://studentlife.mit.edu/cac/personal-event-opportunities](http://studentlife.mit.edu/cac/personal-event-opportunities). See also their wedding planning packet.

3. When you have a good idea of what dates the chapel is available, contact either Fr. Moloney or another priest about celebrating the wedding.
   - If the priest you’d like to have celebrate the wedding is from outside the Archdiocese of Boston, he will have to get faculties from the Archdiocese (he knows this) and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (he might not know this).

4. If you are a baptized Catholic and have not received the sacrament of Confirmation, the Church strongly urges you to try to receive it before the wedding (see c. 1065). Mention that in your initial conversation with the priest.

5. You will need to arrange to have a new baptismal certificate sent from the parish where you were baptized to the priest you are working with. This is a normal task for the parish to do under canon law, everywhere in the world. This should be a new baptismal form, not one from the time of your Baptism, but ideally created within six months of the wedding day.
   - If the baptismal form does not include a record of your confirmation (ask the parish secretary), then you should also contact the parish where you were Confirmed for a confirmation certificate.

6. You will need to attend a retreat, called a Pre-Cana retreat.

7. Over the course of your engagement, you typically have three meetings with the local priest who is preparing you and one with the priest who is marrying you:
   1. The introductory meeting, described above. This will help orient you in the process, map out a plan, and start to think about how you will celebrate the sacrament of marriage.
   2. One meeting after the Pre-Cana retreat, to talk with the local priest about the conversations the retreat provoked.
   3. An individual meeting between the local priest and each person, to fill out paperwork and discuss certain personal aspects of marriage.
   4. A meeting closer to the day of the wedding to discuss the ceremony with the priest who will be celebrating it.

Resources: The Rite of Marriage can be found [here](http://www.usccb.org/bible/rites/first-mariage), with readings [here](http://www.usccb.org/bible/first-mariage-readings). A good FAQ is [here](http://www.usccb.org/bible/faq). The US Bishops’ Conference has a good resource [here](http://www.usccb.org/bible/faq). The Archdiocese of Boston has resources about Natural Family Planning [here](http://www.usccb.org/bible/faq). (If you want to read about NFP, aka, Fertility Awareness Methods, look at this (nonreligious) [website](http://www.usccb.org/bible/faq) and [book](http://www.usccb.org/bible/faq), and this (Catholic) [one](http://www.usccb.org/bible/faq); also, [this](http://www.usccb.org/bible/faq) YouTube channel is helpful. A lot of real life testimonies are [here](http://www.usccb.org/bible/faq).) A classic book on getting married is [here](http://www.usccb.org/bible/faq). A little more theological take is [here](http://www.usccb.org/bible/faq). And then there’s the whole St. JP2 treatment. Good Protestant books are [here](http://www.usccb.org/bible/faq) and [here](http://www.usccb.org/bible/faq).