

Weddings, Marriage Convalidations and Anniversaries at St. Francis of Assisi



Welcome to St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Community! We are delighted that you have chosen St. Francis as the place for your wedding, marriage convalidation or anniversary. We would like to assist you in making this liturgical celebration as beautiful and meaningful as it can be. In choosing Sr. Francis of Assisi Church, you have selected a team of ministers that are dedicated to supporting you and your families throughout the wedding day itself, and into the future. Please feel free to call on us as questions arise.

Over the last 22 years we have celebrated more than 1,000 weddings, convalidation and anniversary ceremonies at St. Francis of Assisi. During this time, we have learned a lot about what works well in this space. We have compiled some guidelines that have been helpful in organizing and executing a successful wedding. The pages in this packet contain those guidelines with the hope that they will help you in your planning.

Every attempt has been made to allow for creativity within the boundaries of the liturgical guidelines of the Catholic Church. Ceremony schedules are such to allow ample time for the bridal party to make preparations, celebrate the occasion and have picture taking time at the end.

For a wedding, a rehearsal day will be scheduled prior to your wedding date. For convalidations and anniversaries it is not required but suggested if ceremony will be large.

We thank you for choosing St. Francis of Assisi Church, should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us at 408-223-1562.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

(THIS MAY ALSO APPLY TO MARRIAGE CONVALIDATIONS)

The **Marriage Preparation Class** is required by the Diocese of San Jose. We at St. Francis of Assisi offer our own Marriage Preparation Class. If you would like to attend our class, you must make arrangements directly with our staff wedding coordinator to register for one of the available dates. Other marriage preparation opportunities that we also recommend include, San Jose Catholic Engaged Encounter (<https://www.eesanjose.org>); Engaging the Heart (<https://www.vallombrosa.org>); Marriage for Life (<https://marriageforlifef.com/home>); Building a Christ-Centered Marriage (www.catholicmarriageprep.com); and the Marriage Preparation Class of Our Lady of Peace, Sta. Clara (<http://www.olop-shrine.org/sacraments/marriage/marriage-preparation>). If your wedding preparation takes place in another parish, the priest who is working with you should also be able to provide you with information on this requirement. We have provided a Marriage Prep Opportunities info sheet as well.

The FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding & Study) is an inventory designed to help couples learn more about themselves and their unique relationship. We use this, not as a test to predict the success or failure of a marriage, but to help couples name and work through issues before marriage. FOCCUS is part of the marriage preparation.

Natural Family Planning (NFP) is the only form of birth control accepted by the Catholic Church. Each couple is required to attend an NFP session organized by the Chancery office of the Diocese of San Jose. Registration forms are available in this packet and on our website under Sacraments/Marriage.

Baptism Certificates are required for marriage in the Catholic Church. These must be newly issued originals dated within six months prior to the wedding ceremony. Certificates of First Holy Communion are also required but can be a photocopy of the original.

Self-testimonial and witness forms (known as Form A and B) and other dispensation forms are required. The priest/deacon preparing the couple will complete these forms with the couple.

Marriage License - If a couple has not been wed through a civil ceremony a Marriage License is required, it is obtained through the county Records Office. Please see the separate Marriage License sheet with the information on the County Records Office location, hours and things you need.

LITURGY

As you plan your celebration, you will be asked by your Presider (the Priest) to choose the Biblical texts that will be read at your ceremony. These texts are normally selected from the *Together for Life* booklet. This is an opportunity for you to share with your guests some of the values that you share as a couple. You will also choose who will proclaim the readings. As you choose readers, try to think of friends or family members that are skilled communicators or even better, Lectors at Sunday Mass who can speak slowly and clearly. It is highly recommended that readers rehearse their readings at the church during the wedding rehearsal.

You may also be asked to write and/or select a reader for the Gospel Intercessions (the Prayers of the Faithful). The above recommendations on someone who can speak clearly also apply. Explanation and examples of petitions are available from your church wedding coordinator or the priest who is preparing your wedding. If you plan to write the General Intercession, please submit them to the priest who is doing your marriage preparation.

If a Nuptial Mass is celebrated you may invite one to three people whom you know are trained extra ordinary ministers in Holy Communion (EM) to participate in the wedding liturgy, especially if you plan to have a large number of guests. Please ask them to get a letter from their pastor certifying that they are trained. (EM)

There are cultural practices or traditional customs that may be incorporated into the ceremony (*example: flower offering, veil and cord ceremony*). The practices are welcome but please first discuss them with the priest/deacon celebrant before, and let your church wedding coordinator know.

The recommended resource for planning your wedding celebration is *“Together for Life”* by Reverend Joseph Champlin. It is available in English and Spanish. The priest preparing your marriage can help you go through this book while finalizing your wedding ceremony.

The information on the readings chosen and any cultural practices that will take place can be entered into the ***‘The Order of Marriage’ form*** and provided to the wedding coordinator at the rehearsal. This will help us prepare all that is needed for your wedding day.

ENVIRONMENT

The church environment at St. Francis of Assisi depend on the season of the church liturgical year. Floral arrangements within the sanctuary must not be moved or replaced. We ask that you respect the environment of the church. Your church wedding coordinator can help you with any questions.

Should you choose to add extra decorations please take note of the guidelines below. Please consult us if you have any questions regarding these guidelines.

The seasonal environment of the church, and its liturgical colors must be respected. If you have questions about the church season in which your wedding date falls, we will be happy to provide you with that information.

Floral arrangements, décor and:

- Low flower arrangements or center table pieces may be placed on the floor of the altar platform. **Nothing should be placed on the altar.**
- To prevent possible damage to the chairs, **decorations are not allowed to be attached directly to the chairs, side or back.** However, a metal bracket may be clipped to each chair to which a ribbon or flower arrangement can be attached. No nails, tacks, tape, wire or cable ties may be used. Let us know if chair decorations are part of your plan so we can assist you.
- Due to city codes that regulate public spaces, **no arches, carpet runners or other decorative structures** that impede movement within the aisles are allowed.
- Due to safety, environmental and clean-up concerns **we do not allow the tossing of petals or paper nor birdseed at the start, during or at the end of the ceremony.** The Guest Book signing and receiving lines are not part of the church liturgical ceremony and should be held at the reception.
- We ask that you please inform your guests of the necessity to respect these rules.

Décor Set-up and clean-up:

- The time allotted for decoration set up is **30 minutes before the wedding.** Clean up is **30 minutes after the ceremony.** We ask that you plan your decorations to fit into this timeframe.

WEDDING COORDINATOR

Our wedding coordinators are specialists in Church weddings.

Our **Staff Wedding Coordinator** will work with you initially, making sure your wedding and rehearsal dates and times are entered into our calendar, and communicate with you in regards to the deposit and final payments. The staff coordinator will coordinate with the priest preparing you, ensure that all requirements are met, mail your Wedding License to the County Records office and register your wedding into the church Canonical Books.

You will be contacted a few days before your rehearsal to remind you of the date and time and be able to answer any questions you have.

At your wedding rehearsal:

- the 'Conditions and Expectations...' document you signed will be reviewed with you;
- you will be oriented about the church facility;
- the wedding service will be reviewed with you (and your priest/deacon should he choose to attend), including any cultural or traditional custom you are incorporating into your ceremony;
- answer questions regarding the actual service

Your coordinator will attend your wedding to supervise set-up, guide florists, photographers and musicians; orient your presider to the Sacristy (if a visiting priest), help keep track of time and supervise clean-up after the wedding.

On your wedding day you should plan to arrive at church exactly 30 minutes before your wedding ceremony start. The bride, groom and all the wedding party should arrive fully dressed and should arrange to leave purses and other portable items with family or friends. Do not leave valuables in your car or at the back of the church, the parish is not responsible for any loss or theft.

During the 30 minutes immediately prior to the ceremony start your florist should set up the flowers; the photographer should plan the shots; and the musicians should warm up. It is critical that the bridal couple and the wedding party know ahead of time what is expected of them, so that all will enjoy this special time. Your coordinator is there to help. To have the most positive experience of your wedding please follow the directions of your wedding coordinator.

We are pleased to work with and to support you as you begin a new chapter in your lives together. Once again, we thank you for choosing St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church for your wedding.

MUSIC

We know that this is a very happy and busy time for you and we share your hope that everything about your wedding day will be beautiful and joyous. This page explains policies specific to St. Francis of Assisi Church concerning who may provide the music and what music is appropriate.

Leslie Legacion – our Music Director can guide you through the process and assist you in choosing appropriate liturgical music that will make your wedding uniquely sacred and beautiful. Leslie can also provide you with names of professional or church musicians who can provide for all your wedding music needs. Leslie can be reached by email at leslie.legacion@dsj.com

Some frequently asked questions:

We have a song which is ‘special’ for us. May we request that it be sung at our wedding liturgy?

The wedding liturgy is concerned with the with the spiritual dimensions of love. Songs sung at this liturgy must be religious in nature, expressing not only your love for each other but also the love of God – the source of all love. Secular music (e.g. music which was composed for Broadway or a top-40 or commercial song) is not permitted for the wedding ceremony. You may have your special song played at the reception.

Could our ‘special’ song be sung before the wedding liturgy begins or played as prelude music?

Prelude music and songs before the wedding liturgy set the tone for the Sacrament of Christian Marriage which is about to take place. Secular music which is not permitted during the wedding liturgy would also not be permitted for prelude music.

Our ‘special’ song was sung at a cousin’s/friend’s wedding. Why can’t it be sung at ours?

While secular music has been used at times in some parishes, it really is not permitted. Church guidelines do not permit the use of secular music in the wedding liturgy.

We have a friend / relative who would like to sing a solo. Is this permissible?

Yes, if the musical criteria mentioned above is followed. There are appropriate times during the wedding ceremony where solo singing is allowed, for instance, during the seating of guests and Preparation of the Gifts. The Wedding Coordinator and parish musicians will assist you in the appropriate inclusion of a special solo song.

Do we have to use musicians from St. Francis of Assisi Parish?

Using the parish pianist, cantor(s) or choir is the best choice to ensure things go smoothly. Our experienced musicians are familiar with the flow of the liturgy, appropriate time for musician/cantor, along with the technical aspects of the sound system and microphones. For this reason, we recommend couples hire parish musicians. If there is a strong rationale for hiring musicians from outside the parish, this must be discussed and approved by the Music Director a minimum of 6 weeks prior to the wedding. In such a case all music selections need to be submitted to the Music Director a minimum of 4 weeks prior to the wedding date for review and approval.

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY

We realize the importance of preserving memories of your wedding, convalidation or anniversary day on video or in photographs. In order to protect the sacredness and integrity of the liturgy, we need to establish strict rules for the photographers/videographers. **These rules are non-negotiable.**

*If the photographer/videographer declines to accept them, he/she should not be engaged to work at the ceremony. **If the photographer violates these rules during the ceremony, the ceremony may be stopped and the photographer will be required to leave.** These rules are for professionals and amateurs alike. **The bridal couple will ensure that these rules are communicated to the official photographer(s) and to all family members and other guests who might desire to use their cameras at the wedding.***

1. The photographer must **meet the wedding coordinator** before the ceremony starts and **agree that they will follow these rules fully.** The photographer and his or her assistant(s) must obey the directions of the wedding coordinator or celebrant officiating at the ceremony at all times.
2. The photographer must **dress professionally** for the ceremony (and the rehearsal, if he or she is in attendance) and must behave always in a manner befitting a church setting (e.g. professional dress excludes jeans, T-shirts, beach wear, slippers, shorts, tank-tops, caps, and any garb, graphics, language or body decoration that upsets the dignity of the Church occasion and place). The wedding coordinator and/or the officiate have the final say on this issue.
3. The photographer should **be as unobtrusive** as possible. At no time should the photographer stand in anyone's view and prevent anyone from participating fully in the wedding (including bridal party members, family members, ministers, musicians, guests, or anyone else present). The photographer should not walk around the church during moments of liturgical prayer, silence, solo singing, scripture proclamations, sermon and the like.
4. No one in the procession should be asked to pause for pictures once the procession begins.
5. **During** the wedding **NO flash or flood lighting** are allowed in the church. Artificial lighting for posed photographers arranged for before or after the wedding Mass or Service is allowed provided there is sufficient time on the allotted ceremony schedule.
6. The **photographer must not enter the sanctuary area of the church** at any time during the ceremony. During the posed photographic session, admission will be allowed. **Equipment is not to be placed on the altar, ambo (a.k.a. pulpit) or any other sanctuary furniture at any time before, during or after the wedding.**
7. Video cameras must be **stationary**, not roving, and used **without artificial lighting** of any kind. The stations allowed for video cameras will be designated by the officiate. No electrical cables may be strung along the floor. Accommodation can be made whereby the audio recording can be tied into the church sound system or the officiating priest or deacon.

(Photography/Videography continued on reverse page)

8. Church **furnishings will not be moved** for the sake of photographs. Seasonal decorations in the church for the liturgical seasons must be left in place “as is” for the wedding.
9. During the pre-arranged posed photo session (before or after the wedding) **a proper and dignified atmosphere must always be maintained** in the church. Lights will gladly be left “on” and candles lighted if desired. No “gag shots will be allowed.
10. Remove all equipment or and other rubbish from the church immediately after the wedding. The church will not be responsible for items lost or stolen.
11. Please ask your photographer/videographer not to place business cards in the church or vestibule of the church.

Please provide a copy of the rules to the photographer/videographer, have them sign the information sheet below and return it to the Wedding Staff Coordinator. (Gillian.griffis@dsj.org)

If two different groups/businesses, please have them each sign.

Wedding Date/Time: _____

Name (Photographer or Videographer) _____

Business Name or Address: _____

Email: _____

I have read the church rules regarding photography/videography, I understand and agree to follow these rules.

Signature: _____ Date: _____