

St. Francis of Assisi Parish

Overview of Marriage and Convalidation Ceremonies



Welcome to St. Francis of Assisi Parish. We are delighted that you have chosen our church as the place for your wedding or marriage convalidation ceremony. We would like to assist you in making this liturgical celebration as beautiful and meaningful as possible.

In choosing St. Francis of Assisi Parish (SFA), 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 read through the Marriage and Convalidation Process information.

Please feel free to call on us as questions arise at **408-223-1562**.

RESERVATION AND PAYMENT WEDDING FEES

We shall only deal with the bride and groom, and no one else, regarding the marriage reservations, the rehearsal, payments, and the wedding ceremony itself.

The enforcement of the following rules and policies lies on the Pastor not on the Presiding/Officiating Priest. This means that any commitment or approval made by the couple with the Priest outside of these policies and rules will have no effect.

Reservation

The couple may call the Parish office to find out if the date they would like is available, however, before the date is added to the calendar, we must receive initially **(1)** a written permission from the Pastor of their home parish (if not a parishioner of SFA), **(2)** a completed Request Form, **(3)** signed Conditions and Expectations form, and **(4)** have been interviewed by a SFA priest. **A non-refundable registration fee of \$200 is required** to secure a date in the church. We only reserve the chapel six (6) months to wedding date.

Wedding & Convalidation Fees

The payment for a Wedding Ceremony at St. Francis of Assisi is:

- **\$1,500** for a registered parishioner, and **\$2,500** for non-registered parishioner.
- The full payment of the wedding fee must be made **two (2) months before the wedding date**. Non-compliance will result to an automatic cancellation of the wedding date preferred and will give the date to others.
- The SFA priests and staff have busy schedule, thus we will not make any follow ups, rather couples are expected to comply based on the signed conditions and expectations.

What the fee covers?

The wedding fees cover the rental of the church, staff and ceremony coordinator's services and the preparation if performed by a SFA in-house priest.

This payment does not include stipends or fees for clergy outside of SFA Parish, nor for music, choir director, musicians, florists, photographers, videographers, and/or limousine service. The fees do not include any Marriage Preparation or Natural Family Planning seminar or retreat and it does not include the FOCCUS that you may need to take. The bride and groom assume the responsibility for payment for such fees or stipends.

Marriage Preparation Fee

Marriage preparation done at SFA for weddings that are to take place elsewhere requires payment of the **\$300** fee before the preparation begins.

WEDDING TIME & CEREMONY TIMEFRAME

Our chapel is used for many ceremonies and events in addition to our regular Masses. **We prioritize the use of the chapel for liturgical celebrations for our own parishioners.** The following wedding timeframes must be strictly followed:

Saturday Weddings

Saturdays are scheduled for either **11:30 am** or **1:30 pm**.

Weekday Weddings

Monday-Friday, except first Friday of the month.

A wedding held on a weekday can be between **11:30 am** start time or **1:30 pm** start time.

We do not hold weddings on Sundays.

Timeframe

The Chapel is available to the couple...

- Thirty (30) minutes before the wedding start time for decorating and preparation.
- One (1) hour for the wedding rite.
- Usually thirty (30) minutes for picture taking and clearing all environment and décor. Picture taking should be no later than the specified time.

It is crucial that you plan your wedding and all décor according to the allotted timeframe. The stipulated timeframe cannot be extended. The Wedding Ceremony Coordinator will ask everyone to leave after the time frame whether the picture taking is done. Lights will be put out after the time frame

NOTE: Please see 'Environment – Decorating for your ceremony' section regarding decorating and the moving or changing of church fixtures.

Arrival and Wedding start time

The Bridal Party, Bride and Groom must be at the church 30 minutes prior to the Ceremony start time. The wedding ceremony must begin at the time scheduled. The march begins with or without the bride, groom, or both.

NOTE: SFA church does not have a designated Bride's Room for the bride to dress or get ready. The bride and bridal party must arrive fully ready.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

(This may also apply to Marriage Convalidation)

The Marriage Preparation (Pre-Cana) will be done in accordance with the laws of the Catholic Church. **The marriage preparation takes about six months and is conducted by the priest preparing the couple.** Please refer to the checklist of requirements in the packet.

The priest will complete the Self-testimonial and Witness forms (known as Form A and Form B) with the couple.

Additional Requirements:

- **Marriage Preparation**

Prior to the wedding, the couple must attend a workshop or retreat. Marriage Prep Retreats / Workshops are designed to fine tune practical skills for your marriage, such as **conflict resolution, decision-making, financial management, and communication**, to build on your knowledge of each other. Your priest may recommend a specific workshop or retreat, or you may choose from the list of classes/retreats on the Marriage Preparation Opportunities document.

Please submit a certificate of completion to the priest preparing you.

- **The FOCCUS questionnaire**

Your priest *may* recommend that you additionally take the FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding & Study) as part of your marriage preparation. This is an inventory designed to help couples learn more about themselves and their unique relationship. This enables the couple to work through any issues prior to marriage.

- **Natural Family Planning (NFP)**

NFP is the only form of birth control accepted by the Catholic Church. The couple is required to attend an NFP session organized by the Chancery office of the Diocese of San Jose. Please visit the link for more details.

<https://www.dsj.org/evangelization/family-life/natural-family-planning/>

- **Baptism Certificates**

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

- **Marriage License - County Marriage License**

This can be from any county in the state of California. It must be issued within 90 days (3 months) to wedding date. If the wedding is for **convalidation**, that is the couple has been civilly married, a copy of the Marriage License is required.

Please see the 'Marriage License Info sheet' in the packet.

LITURGY

As you plan your celebration, you will be asked by the Priest preparing you to select the Scripture Readings, Prayers of the Faithful and possibly the Responsorial Psalm. These texts are normally selected from the *Together for Life* booklet, which is available in English or Spanish, and provided to you by the priest or parish.

You may select your family or friends to *proclaim* the readings for your ceremony. Please consider selecting only those who are comfortable proclaiming in front of an assembly. They must attend the rehearsal in the parish. The Responsorial Psalm may be sung by the musician you have chosen or it may be recited.

Customs that may be incorporated into the ceremony for *example: flower offering to Mary, veil and cord*. These customs are welcomed but must be discussed first with the priest or deacon in advance who will witness the wedding.

Liturgy Planning Information

At least three (3) months prior to your wedding date you will receive an email with the Ceremony Planning Info sheet and Wedding Party Info spreadsheet. These should be completed and provided to the Staff Wedding Coordinator a minimum of two (2) months prior to your rehearsal date.

Readings and Responsorial Psalms

We can provide you with a PDF or a book of the Readings and Responsorial Psalms in English or Spanish.

ENVIRONMENT

Decorating for your wedding ceremony

The church environment at St. Francis of Assisi Parish depends on the season of the church's liturgical calendar. Parish floral arrangements within the sanctuary may not be moved or replaced. We ask that you respect the environment of the church. Should you choose to add flowers please follow the guidelines below. Your wedding ceremony coordinator can assist you with any questions.

Décor Set-up and clean-up

Please note that the decorating time is **30 minutes prior to the start of the liturgy**. Everything **must be removed within 30 minutes after the ceremony**. Make sure you inform any person or company you have hired about the timeframe. Wedding Coordinators will remove all decorations that remain after the time frame.

Floral arrangements, and décor

The church always has flower arrangements in the sanctuary.

- **Nothing is allowed to be placed on the altar.** Additional low flower arrangements or center table pieces may be placed on the floor in *front* of the altar.

- **Decorations are not allowed to be attached directly to the chairs, side or back.** No nails, tacks, tape, wire, or cable ties may be used. However, a metal bracket may be clipped to each chair for floral/ribbon pieces. Please let us know your needs in advance.
- **No arches, carpet runners or other decorative structures** that impede movement within the aisles are allowed.
- **The tossing of petals/paper/ birdseed/rice before or after the ceremony is not permitted.** Guest Book signing and reception lines are not part of the church ceremony and should be held at the reception, not at the church.
- We ask that you please inform your guests or any company hired of the necessity to respect all of these rules.

MUSIC

The Sacrament of Marriage is a liturgical celebration. Therefore, one of the basic principles that should underlie your selection of music is whether the music is indeed liturgical music. Popular songs and secular music, no matter how meaningful they may be to you, have no place in the liturgy. Additionally, pre-recorded music (CDs, etc.) are not permitted in the liturgical celebration. They may be appropriately performed at your wedding reception. For the wedding liturgy you'll want to ensure that the emphasis is on sacred music, which derives its context from scriptural and liturgical sources, and by its very nature enhances your union within the liturgical rites being celebrated.

Any further questions can be directed to **Leslie Legacion**, our Director of Music. She can guide you through the process and assist you in choosing appropriate music for the ceremony; or connect you with other musicians and singers (Spanish, Vietnamese, etc.) who can be available to serve on your wedding day. Her email is leslie.legacion@dsj.org

The general order of a Nuptial Wedding Mass where music is included:

Procession of the Bridal Party

Procession of the Bride

Responsorial Psalm (*between the first and second readings*)

Gospel Acclamation

Preparation of Gifts

Mass Eucharistic Acclamations

Rite of Communion

Flower Offering to the Virgin Mary (*Optional*)

Recessional Song

If you are requesting any 'special' songs to be sung and played during the ceremony, please remember that secular music is not permitted. You may have prelude music as guests are arriving and getting seated; in which we still encourage traditional/appropriate music selections. Traditional instrumental music such as "Canon in D," "The Bridal/Wedding March," "Jesu, Joy of a Man's

Desiring,” etc. are permitted in the church. Please reach out to Leslie for your additional questions and ideas.

Questions about musicians and singers, Leslie Legacion can assist you with contracting, coordinating and planning musicians of your choice. However, our experienced musicians are familiar with the structure and timing of the liturgy, and the technical aspects of the sound system.

STAFF WEDDING COORDINATOR/WEDDING CEREMONY COORDINATOR

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 wedding payment. The wedding coordinator ensures that all requirements are met prior to the ceremony and will mail in your wedding license to the County Records office after the wedding. Please refer to ‘Marriage License Info sheet’ in the packet for couple’s responsibility.

Your Wedding Ceremony Coordinator

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

She will guide you through the ceremony during the rehearsal and she will be present on your wedding day, the presiding priest and the wedding party to make sure everything goes smoothly.

Your wedding rehearsal:

- We require that all those in the wedding party be present at the wedding rehearsal. Anyone who is not in the rehearsal will not be allowed to join the entourage on the wedding ceremony.
- The wedding ceremony coordinator will guide everyone in the entourage procession and ensure that everyone knows their respective roles and where they will be seated.
- The wedding ceremony coordinator will review with you (and your priest/deacon should he choose to attend), including any cultural or traditional customs you are incorporating into your ceremony.
- The wedding ceremony coordinator may have the witnesses pre-complete name and address so that all that is needed after the ceremony is their signature.
- The wedding ceremony coordinator will review the ‘Conditions and Expectations...’ document in the packet and answer any last minute questions you may have.

On your wedding day the wedding ceremony coordinator will supervise set-up, guide florists, photographers and musicians; orient your presider to the Sacristy (if a visiting priest), help keep track of time and ensure clean-up after the wedding within the time frame allowed.

On your wedding day

You are expected to arrive at the church no later than 30 minutes before your scheduled wedding time. The bride, groom and all the wedding party should arrive fully dressed. Please note, **the parish is not responsible** for any loss or theft. We suggest you leave valuables with family or friends. The Wedding liturgy will begin promptly with or without the bride, groom, or both.

Your florist, photographer, and musicians should arrive 30 minutes prior to your wedding time.

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY

We realize the importance of preserving memories of your ceremony on video or in photographs. To protect the sacredness and integrity of the liturgy, we have outlined below the rules photographers/videographers must follow.

The couple are responsible for providing the documented rules to the photographer/videographer and ensuring that they understand the requirements.

The signed contract must be provided back to the Staff Wedding Coordinator at least two months prior to the rehearsal date.

NOTE: 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.

Please review the Photography/Videography Rules on the ‘Photo-Video Rules-Contract’ form.

Remember to provide a copy of the Rules-Contract to your photographer/videographer. We will need you to send in the signed contract at least two (2) months prior to the Rehearsal date.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledged that we have read the Saint Francis of Assisi Parish Overview for Marriage Ceremonies and Marriage Convalidation Ceremonies and fully understand the conditions and expectations stipulated herein.

Bride: Print name & signature

Groom: Print name & signature

Date: