

CONGRATULATIONS

We offer our best wishes to you regarding your engagement and forthcoming wedding at St. Francis by the Sea Catholic Church. Your wedding is a sacred ritual, which consecrates your love and commitment before the community of the Church and your family. Our staff is here to assist you so that this most special sacrament will be a memorable and holy one.

YOUR WEDDING IN THE COMMUNITY OF THE CHURCH

In choosing to be married in the Church, you are making a statement of faith and commitment not only to each other, but also to God. The Sacrament of Marriage is a sacred union of two people who wish to have God's help and blessing not only on their most special day but every day of their married life. Your wedding is an act that worships God and celebrates the love you have found with each other. It will be taking place in a sacred environment before the community of the Church. Therefore, your wedding liturgy should function as a call to all present (not just the wedding couple) for a deeper encounter with God.

Catholic marriage should be celebrated in one's own parish church, as this is the center of family worship. Your pastor also has jurisdiction over the Sacrament of Matrimony. Weddings are allowed to be celebrated at St. Francis without a charge if you are a registered active, contributing parishioner. The same is true if you have a parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle (close relative) who is a registered parishioner.

FIRST STEPS

In order that all run smoothly, please read the following information carefully. Those wishing to enter marriage must first contact the celebrant or deacon who will be presiding at least six months before the wedding date can be set. This is a Diocese of Charleston policy. It is the duty and responsibility of those being married to contact their parish priest, take the necessary marriage instructions and have all the necessary papers completed by their pastor or his delegate.

Cohabitation: While cohabitation is accepted in our society, we know it is an evil, which contradicts the interior truth of marriage. A wedding date will not be set until the couple seeks counsel from their Pastor. Non-registered parishioners and those outside of the parish must furnish a letter from their Pastor indicating this counsel has been given and that the couple is ready for the worthy reception of the Sacrament. All other marriage papers must also be submitted.

If there has been a previous marriage you must inform the Pastor. It will be necessary that the freedom to marry be ascertained according to Church law. This may mean that one or both parties may have to obtain an annulment prior to a wedding being scheduled here.

No date for a wedding can be made until the freedom to marry has been determined. If you have been granted an annulment, proper documentation must be presented to the Pastor to determine if any other actions need to take place prior to the wedding. If you do not live in the Hilton Head area, this documentation must be mailed to the Pastor at his request. The issue of a previous marriage and the decree of nullity apply to both Catholics and non-Catholics.

Once the freedom to marry has been determined a date and time will be set. At the time you speak with the Pastor he will confirm the date and time of the wedding and the rehearsal.

All weddings are celebrated on Saturdays. Because of our regular weekend liturgical schedule, they are celebrated at 2:00 PM.

Arrangements for weddings must be made directly with the Pastor or his delegate not with members of the parish staff. The Bride or Groom or both must make the arrangements. Arrangements will not be made through parents, friends or wedding coordinators.

ADDITIONAL FEES

(These are due a week prior to your wedding)

Priest/Deacon stipend:	\$225.00
Organist:	\$250.00
Cantor	\$150.00
Altar Servers	\$20.00
Instrumentalists	will vary

THE CHURCH BUILDING

St. Francis is a beautiful building and we work hard to maintain its beauty as a place of worship and prayer. The following rules apply to the use of our building for a wedding:

- Nothing may be removed in the building without first consulting with the Pastor.
- No additional candles may be placed in the sanctuary. The exception being a memorial candle or the Unity candle. This must be approved by the Pastor. Pew torches may be used. They must be rented from the florist since the church does not have them.
- No runners are permitted in the church.
- No rice or birdseed may be thrown outside the church. Bubbles are allowed.
- Flower girls may scatter silk flower petals in the processional. These must be picked up immediately after the wedding is finished.
- Bows may be attached to the pews using only elastic bands, string or ribbon (tacks, nails, tape and metal devices are not permitted).
- There is a room for the bride and her attendants to dress in or stay in until it is time for the wedding. This room must be kept clean. St. Francis is not responsible for any items left in this room after the wedding party has left for the reception. Make sure that you check to see that everything has been removed before you leave.
- No alcoholic beverages are permitted at anytime on the property. Consumption of alcohol by the bride or groom or wedding party will postpone the wedding.

FLOWERS, PICTURES, VIDEOS

There are a number of good florists here on the island who have all done weddings at St. Francis. They know what we expect and what is allowed for a wedding. If there is any question, contact the Pastor or his delegate in advance of the wedding. Unusual arrangements that have not been approved may not be permitted in the church. We ask that the flowers be left in the church as a thanksgiving offering.

As with the florists there are a number of photographers and videographers who work on the island. Most of them have done weddings here at St. Francis. They are aware of our guidelines concerning pictures and videos. If you bring your own photographer, they must contact the Pastor or his delegate prior to the wedding to discuss the guidelines. This may not be done the day of the wedding.

During the wedding, guests are to refrain from taking pictures. It is very distracting and lessens the dignity of the Liturgy. Please inform your guests of this request prior to the wedding. If someone wishes to videotape, the camera must be mounted on a tripod and left alone during the ceremony. It must also be placed in an unobtrusive place such as next to the Baptistery in the back of the church.

Chewing gum is not permitted in the church and guests will be asked to dispose of any prior to the wedding. Guests will also be asked to turn off beepers and cell phones.

***These housekeeping notes will be reviewed before each
Wedding - no exceptions.***

WHO'S WHO IN YOUR WEDDING

OFFICIANTS AT WEDDINGS

The Pastor, the Parochial Vicar (assistant pastor), and our Deacons are available to celebrate your wedding here at St. Francis. If the wedding is a nuptial Mass, the Pastor or Parochial Vicar will offer the Mass. One of the Deacons may assist. The normal fees apply.

If the wedding is a ceremony outside of the Mass, either the Pastor, Parochial Vicar or one of the Deacons may preside at the wedding. Priests and Deacons who are relatives or friends of the family may celebrate the wedding. The customs and the way we celebrate the liturgy at St. Francis is to be observed in all cases.

Clergy from other denominations or faiths, who have a connection to the bride or groom, may assist at the wedding by taking the appropriate parts assigned to them.

WITNESSES AND ATTENDANTS

Law and custom require that there be two witnesses at every wedding. These are usually the Best Man and the Maid or Matron of Honor. They attest to the fact that the wedding took place. In the state of South Carolina, they do not sign the marriage license. This is done by the Bride and Groom immediately following the wedding.

Ushers, Bridesmaids, Junior Bridesmaids, Flower Girls, and Ring Bearers are all permitted. They must be present at the rehearsal. No Flower Girls or Ring Bearers under the age of four are permitted. It is difficult for younger children to be attentive to what is going on and what is expected of them.

READERS

The proclamation of Scripture is central to all worship. Please select readers who are comfortable reading before a congregation and who can read articulately and slowly. Readings are to be chosen from the book TOGETHER FOR LIFE which will be provided. You are asked to choose a reading from the Old Testament, a second reading and a Gospel. The Responsorial Psalm between the first and second reading is always sung and will be led by the parish cantor. Copies of the readings chosen for the wedding will be provided at the rehearsal and formal copies will be on the ambo (pulpit) for the actual liturgy. The readers must be present at the rehearsal.

SERVERS AND GIFT BEARERS

The parish will provide a server for the wedding. If there is a member of your family who you would like to serve, please inform the Pastor and have that person at the rehearsal. They will be fitted with cassocks and chasubles used at St. Francis and will be instructed in our procedure.

During the celebration of the Nuptial Mass the gifts of bread and wine are brought forward and presented at the Altar. Please have all of these roles chosen before the rehearsal so participants will be able to practice.

MUSIC AT THE WEDDING

Music is integral to the wedding celebration. Only Sacred music that is appropriate for a church wedding will be permitted. There are no exceptions. Good classical music is permitted for instrumental selections. The Director of Music has the final word on all selections. Cantors from St. Francis are used at all of the weddings to chant the Psalms and lead the singing. If you desire any other instrumentalists, the arrangements must be made through the Director of Music who has contacts with quality musicians in the area. Any friends whom you wish to use as singers or instrumentalists must be approved. The cantor is still required to chant the liturgical music.

Please contact The Office of Music Ministries at least three months before the wedding for all information concerning music at your wedding. (1-843-681-6350 x 245.) You will be supplied with a music packet to assist you in the musical aspects of your wedding.

DOCUMENTATION

There are certain documents that are required as part of the wedding preparation process. These documents must be filed with the church prior to the wedding rehearsal. All documentation must be received at St. Francis six weeks prior to the wedding. All forms must be original; no faxed copies are acceptable. If the papers are not completed the wedding will be canceled by St. Francis. We assume no responsibility for incomplete papers and we reserve the right to cancel any wedding when the necessary papers, dispensations, and regulations are not completed in time.

The following documents are required:

- **Baptismal Certificates:** A copy of your baptismal certificate or a letter from the church where you were baptized must be obtained for the wedding file. Catholics will need to contact the church where they were baptized to obtain a freshly issued copy of their baptismal certificate. Non-Catholics are asked to contact the church of their baptism for a letter or certification as to their baptism in that particular denomination.
- **Pre-nuptial Questionnaire:** Required for all weddings. This is done with the person preparing you for marriage.
- **Affidavit of freedom to marry:** Required for all weddings. This will be done with the person preparing you for marriage.
- **Dispensation** (if required): This applies to a wedding between a Catholic and a non-Catholic. This will be done by the person preparing you for marriage. This needs to be processed through the diocese where you reside and where you are doing your wedding preparation.
- **Letter of Acknowledgment:** A form letter will be provided for you to present to the person who is preparing you for marriage. This applies to persons doing their wedding preparation program at a place other than St. Francis. This must be returned to the Pastor as soon as possible. It is required for all weddings.
- **Letter of Delegation:** This comes from the Pastor of your home parish granting permission for you to be married here at St. Francis.
- **Annulment Decree** (if required): If there was a previous marriage a copy of the Annulment Decree must be presented to the Pastor before the wedding is scheduled. A copy of this must be placed in the wedding file.
- **Pre-Cana Certificate:** You will receive this document upon completion of the daylong Pre-Cana program. You should give this document to the Pastor or his delegate.
- **Marriage License:** You are responsible for obtaining the marriage license, which may be obtained at the Beaufort County Courthouse. You cannot be married without this license. Please bring the marriage license (3 copies) with you to the rehearsal. Do not sign or fill in the license. This will be done in the presence of the Priest or Deacon.

THE REHEARSAL

Please inform all who will participate in the rehearsal that the Church is a sacred place and that everyone should behave accordingly. Refreshments are not allowed in the church and small children are not allowed to run around or play in the sanctuary. The wedding rehearsal will be led by our wedding coordinating team. *There are to be no outside wedding coordinators present at the rehearsal.* All special requests and nonmusical questions must be dealt with through the Pastor/Associate Pastor or Wedding Team at least two weeks prior to the rehearsal.

AFTER THE WEDDING

Receiving lines after the Liturgy are not held at the church but are a function of the wedding reception. To insure that nothing is left in the church, please assign someone the responsibility to collect all your belongings afterward.

FINALLY

At the end of these guidelines is an agreement and photography guidelines, which state that you have read these guidelines and agree to abide by them. This must be signed and returned to the wedding coordinator. This must be done six weeks prior to the wedding.

Please use the months ahead to prepare spiritually for receiving the Sacrament of Matrimony. It takes three to get married: bride, groom, and God! Pray together daily, be reconciled to God and as Catholics attend Mass and receive Holy Communion frequently. Catholics are to be in the state of grace when receiving the Sacrament of Matrimony. Confession times are posted in your church. If you wish confession at the rehearsal, please notify the priest. May God bless you!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Michael J. Oenbrink