

St. Francis of Assisi Parish
Sacrament of Christian Marriage Information

Dear Couple:

St. John writes: “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.” (1 John 4:7-8). How exciting that the love of God for each of you has enabled you to love yourselves and one another! We are happy to help you to celebrate your Christian Marriage in our Parish community.

You may have many questions about the process in our parish. Before meeting with the Pastor it will be helpful to read the information below which is divided up into three sections. The first, Marriage Liturgy Requirements, explains some do’s and don’t with regards to the actual celebration of the Liturgy. The second, Guidelines for Music during the Marriage Liturgy, has catechetical information about music during the liturgy, as well as some specific requirements. The final section, Marriage Preparation Process, outlines in check list form all the various steps that need to take place before your Christian Marriage is celebrated.

N.B. Page numbers refer to “The Order of Celebrating Matrimony: Liturgy Planning Guide” booklet you will receive at your first meeting with the parish priest.

Marriage Liturgy Requirements

1. **Marriage within and outside of Mass:** Only two practicing Catholics may celebrate their Christian Marriage in the Eucharist, i.e., Mass. Marriage is a sacrament of unity and during the ritual it is not appropriate to make the disunity of the couple prominent by having only one of them receive communion.
2. **Punctuality:** The Liturgy of Christian Marriage will begin on time. Starting on time is a sign of respect and care for the invited guests and ministers.
3. **Entrance Procession:** The procession will have both the bride and the groom, since both are the ministers of the Sacrament and have equal importance in the eyes of God. The arrangement of the entire wedding party is negotiable and the pastor will have ideas for you to consider. It is also possible to have the cross and candle bearers, (if you wish to ask someone to do so) and readers in the procession.
4. **Liturgy of the Word:** Only readings from Sacred Scripture will be proclaimed at the Liturgy. No other written text is of higher significance and importance in the Christian life. You should choose 3 competent readers for the first and second

reading and the General Intercessions or Petitions. Choosing good readers is a sign of respect for the reader, the assembly and the importance of the Word of God.

5. **Music in the Celebration:** The music chosen in consultation with the music minister will express the faith of the Church and be appropriate for the sacred action it accompanies. Therefore, profane and secular songs are not used in the Church. Hymns and Mass parts, if the Eucharist is celebrated, should be chosen that the entire congregation can easily sing.
6. **Flowers and Decorations:** Flowers may be used to decorate for the Liturgy. Since you are bringing the flowers to decorate "God's House" we greatly appreciate you leaving them at the Church. Other decorations must be discussed in advance with the parish priest as to their appropriateness and suitability.
7. **Photographs and videos:** The use of cameras by the congregation is a distraction for them and for the couple and presider and therefore is not encouraged. Professionals with cameras or video equipment are permitted. They must be discrete, never come into the sanctuary area and they must never interrupt the service under any circumstances.
8. **Consent and Rings:** Couples ought to be aware of the vows they are making to God and the importance of the words for the exchange of rings. Therefore, couples will memorize their vows and the formula for the exchange of rings (pg. 78).
9. **Dress:** The dress of all the members of the wedding party and the ministers functioning in the liturgy should be modest and discrete in keeping with the solemnity of the liturgy and the location in which it is happening.
10. **Unity Candle:** The use of such a ritual is not part of the Liturgy of Christian Marriage.

Guidelines for Music during the Marriage Liturgy

The Music Minister of St. Francis of Assisi Parish will prepare the music with you and play the music at your Marriage Liturgy. Cantors from St. Francis of Assisi Parish will lead the assembly in sung prayer during the liturgy. Singers and Musicians from outside the parish community may participate in the liturgy only with the express permission of the Parish Music Minister. It is essential that the Music Minister be involved at every level of preparation of the music for the Marriage Liturgy. Meeting early with the Music Minister to make preliminary arrangements for the music for the Marriage Liturgy is most advisable.

MUSIC AT THE LITURGY

N.B. All congregational hymns will be selected from the hymnals found in the pews.

A. Gathering and Prelude

Although not strictly part of the wedding liturgy, music while the congregation gathers fosters the sense of celebration. The same principles regarding the choice of appropriate music apply here, i.e., Christian or Classical pieces in harmony with Christian teachings.

B. Introductory Rites

1. Processional - Gathering Hymn

Here there are two options:

- a) The members of the procession take their places while an instrumental is played. Then the Congregation participates in the Gathering Hymn found in a hymnal. N.B., Only one (instrumental) processional is played. It should, therefore, be long enough to provide for the entrance of all members of the procession. Separate musical selections are not played for parents, bridal party members, groom and/or bride to enter.
- b) The procession happens while the Congregation participates in the Gathering Hymn found a hymnal.

C. Liturgy of the Word

1. Responsorial psalm.

The Psalm is the Word of God set to music. The psalm supplies our response to the first reading in the language of the scriptures. The psalm at the marriage liturgy is usually one of psalm 33, 34, 103, 128, 138, or 145, although another suitable psalm may be chosen. The psalm is never replaced by a hymn or solo song. The cantor (soloist) leads the assembly in the singing of the response and sings the appropriate verses found either in the CBW III or Gather hymnal.

2. Gospel Acclamation

The acclamation is the entire assembly's shout of praise to the Lord who is about to speak in the Gospel. As with the responsorial psalm, the cantor leads the assembly in the "Alleluia" and sings the verse.

D. Marriage Rite

No music is specifically prescribed for the Rite.

If Mass is not celebrated go to section F.

E. Liturgy of the Eucharist

1. Preparation of the Gifts

Music may accompany the preparation of the altar and the procession with the gifts. Music at this point should support, not dominate, the moment. This may take the form of a congregational hymn found in one of the hymnals, a solo hymn by the cantor or instrumental music.

2. Eucharistic Prayer

The Preface dialogue, Holy, Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, and Great Amen are the principal means by which the assembly participates in the prayer. Every effort should be made to elicit full participation through the use of musical settings that are simple and well-known or commonly used at the parish. Each acclamation is normally sung from one setting chosen for all the acclamations. A Lamb of God should also be chosen from the same setting.

3. Communion Procession

The communion song accompanies the reception of communion and expresses the spiritual union of the communicants (and indeed of the entire gathered assembly) through a single song. It begins when the priest takes communion and continues for as long as seems appropriate while the faithful receive Christ's body. The entire assembly should be able to either sing the entire hymn or at least the refrain found in one of the hymnals.

F. The Signing of the Register and the Recessional

The signing of the register and recessional may be accompanied by music. These pieces can be a congregational hymn, a solo hymn or an instrumental piece.

The signing and recessional are minor actions in the Celebration of Christian Marriage. Still, although these moments are not technically part of the liturgy, they remain within the context of the celebration and are guided by the same general principles indicated above.

The piece for the signing ought not to be an overly long piece since the signing is a short event. Think of it as needing music long enough to accompany the action of signing.

Marriage Preparation Process

1. The couple reads the Parish Marriage Information booklet (what you are reading now) either in a hard copy from the parish or online. This will prepare them for their meeting with the Pastor.
2. Couple contacts Parish Office to make an appointment with the parish priest. N.B., Unfortunately dates for the ceremony can only be booked by the parish priest at the initial meeting. Parish Administrative Assistants do not book dates and times.
3. Copies of your Baptismal certificates need to be given to the parish priest at the initial meeting. For the Catholic party, the certificate is valid if dated no earlier than 6 months before the initial meeting with the parish priest. For Christians of other denominations, the original certificate or copy thereof is acceptable. Non-Christian parties need not worry about this.
4. Appointment with parish priest to discuss the process and fill out the required Church forms.
5. The Parish Music Minister, Terrienne Moulton (519-748-1471) will be in contact with you for preliminary discussions about music ministry. Her involvement in music ministry for the liturgy is required at St. Francis of Assisi Parish.

N.B. At the discretion of the pastor couples **may** be required to participate in the Prepare and Enrich Marriage inventory. This involves the following two items:

6. Online filling out the Prepare and Enrich form.
7. Feedback session at the Parish with the parish priest to discuss the results of the Prepare and Enrich inventory.
8. Attend the Marriage Preparation Course. The parish priest will give you the form and brochure at the initial meeting.
9. Apply for and obtain a marriage license from City Hall. Licenses are valid for 3 months from the date of issue. The license and envelope should be brought to the meeting with the priest 2 months before the liturgy. N.B., If there is to be a change of name this must be applied for through the government and is not automatic with marriage. Change of name forms can be obtained through City Hall at the same time.
10. Make an appointment with the parish priest to discuss the Liturgy. (2 months before the date of the Liturgy). You ought to come to the meeting with the following items:

- a. Liturgical Selections (see pgs. 99 – 110 for options)
- b. The marriage license,
- c. The stipends for the musicians, parish and parish priest each in separate envelopes.

We will set rehearsal time and date.

11. Make an appointment with the Parish Music Minister to organize the music for the Liturgy. (2 months before the date of the Liturgy)

12. Stipends for the Marriage are as follows:

To the Parish..... \$200.00

To the Priest (at your discretion)

To each Musician (as determined with the Music Minister)

N.B. given to the parish priest at the 2 month before the date meeting.

13. Rehearsal Date

14. Christian Marriage Date