

WEDDINGS AT ST. FRANCIS
OF ASSISI CATHOLIC CHURCH

PARISH POLICIES

Matrimony is a holy sacrament of the Catholic Church and is not to be taken lightly. Couples who seek this sacrament must be free to wed, thoroughly prepared and pledge to raise their children in the Faith. Our church facility is beautiful and richly adorned in a manner that glorifies our Lord. It is not to be treated simply as a desirable venue for a wedding due to its grand decor. Therefore, the use of the church as a place for the wedding liturgy is regulated.

PREPARATION

The Diocese of Richmond prescribes a six to nine month marriage preparation period. Notify the pastor as soon as possible and set up a meeting with him for an initial interview. It should take place before any social arrangements for the marriage are finalized. The pastor will meet with the couple during the preparation time and conduct a prenuptial investigation. If circumstances hinder such meetings, the pastor can give permission for alternate arrangements.

The Diocese also requires the couple to take a FOCCUS assessment test, attend an Engaged Encounter session, and Natural Family Planning classes. When the pastor certifies that the couple can be married, the date is put on the parish calendar.

The Pastor normally officiates at the marriage rites; however, the couple may request that a family member or friend of the family who is a Catholic priest or deacon in good standing witness the marriage, provided he is so delegated by the pastor. He must also have civil authorization in Virginia. If he comes from outside the Diocese of Richmond, he must be cleared through the Vicar of Clergy. In case of a mixed marriage, the minister of the non-Catholic party may be allowed to participate in the ceremony with restrictions. Diocesan regulations require that the ceremony take place in the church.

The following documents are required:

1. For Catholics: A current baptismal certificate.
2. For non-Catholics: A photocopy of the original baptismal certificate is required. If none is available, a letter from the pastor or church office must be supplied.
3. Copies of current First Communion and Confirmation.
4. A state marriage license.
5. A copy of the declaration of nullity if either party has been married before.

FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

Flower arrangements are made by the couple. Live flower petals should be avoided on the church carpet. Consult with the church flower directors for additional guidelines.

MUSIC

If you wish to have a parish musician sing or play at your wedding, **you must make the necessary arrangement directly with the musicians.** The parish office can provide contact information. The fees usually range from \$150.00 to \$250.00 and are NOT processed through the parish office. Be mindful that the marriage rite is a religious ceremony. All music should be approved beforehand. This also applies when outside musicians are used.

FLOWER GIRLS AND RINGBEARERS

Ring bearer and flower girls should be least five (5) years of age.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Pictures may be taken from the balcony or along the walls of the church during the ceremony so as to respect the religious rite. **Flash photography should be avoided.**

Videotaping may be done from the balcony. **Movie lights should be avoided.**

CEREMONY

Most weddings are scheduled on Saturdays between 11:00am and 2:00pm. Wedding parties should be out of the church by 3:30pm because Confessions begin at that time. Weddings on Sundays should be avoided, however, when a Sunday wedding is scheduled, 2:00pm is the earliest a ceremony can begin. Rehearsals are usually on Friday evenings. **Rehearsal times are scheduled through the pastor so as not to interfere with other church services.**

If the bridal couple are not parishioners, the church use fee is \$500. There is no fee for parishioners.

The celebrant fee is \$200, *please make the check out to the celebrant.*

The facilities coordinator fee is \$100, *please make the check out to the facilities coordinator.*

If altar servers are used, it is suggested that they be given a donation, generally \$20 each.

Altar servers can be arranged by the parish server coordinator.

Ushers may be used to assist with the seating of guests. If a Mass is to be celebrated, the couple may choose two people to bring up the offertory gifts.

The Parish Hall may be used to dress.

Two people may be chosen by the couple to proclaim the readings at Mass. The readers should be mature enough to proclaim the Word of God with adequate volume and clarity.

Non-scriptural readings are not permitted.

Due to safety concerns, rice, birdseed and confetti are not permitted.