



## **St. Francis Xavier Parish Guidelines for the Sacrament of Marriage**

“Love is always patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.”

(St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians 13: 4 - 8)

### **Congratulations on your engagement and being called to the Sacrament of Marriage!**

St. Francis Xavier (SFX) is pleased to assist you with your marriage preparation and plans for a meaningful, prayerful and sacramental wedding celebration.

#### **1. General Requirements**

In the Diocese of Phoenix the marriage preparation program takes at least **nine months**. Additional time may be required in some cases. This time allows for a thorough preparation for the sacrament of marriage.

During this preparation time you will meet with a mentor couple who will guide you through the process. As part of the marriage preparation program, you will take a FOCCUS inventory, which assesses communication and readiness questions, and meet to review the results of your FOCCUS inventory. Additionally, there are 3 Diocesan classes that are offered outside the parish which will provide you with a foundation on which to begin your marriage. You will also complete prenuptial inquiries and witness affidavits of free status. Prior to your wedding day, you will need to obtain a presider and a marriage license. When these items are completed, you will be ready for the sacrament of marriage.

#### **2. Diocesan Classes**

The Diocese of Phoenix requires couples to take 3 classes in preparation for marriage. These classes are designed to be completed as a couple and will introduce you to the Church’s teachings on the sacrament of marriage, explore issues that arise during marriage and introduce you to natural family planning methods.

The classes include the following: 1) Married Life Skills/Engaged Encounter weekend – This class provides you with practical guidance in building a strong and successful marriage. There are options for completing this class. Information is available at <https://phxmarriageprep.org/> or [www.arizonaacee.org](http://www.arizonaacee.org) (for the Engaged Encounter weekend) For Spanish/Español see <https://phxmarriageprep.org/es/inicio/>; 2) God’s Plan for a Joy Filled Marriage – This is a Saturday class that provides you with information on the Church’s teaching on the sacrament of marriage, along with an introduction to natural family planning. Information is available at <https://phxmarriageprep.org/> or Spanish <https://phxmarriageprep.org/es/inicio/> 3) Natural Family Planning – These classes will instruct you on a family planning method that is natural and effective. This series of classes is offered in person or on-line. Information is available at <https://phxmarriageprep.org/>. Whichever option you choose, please allow 4-5 months for the completion of the Natural Family Planning series.

**NOTE:** The classes discussed above are offered outside the parish. You must register for these classes independently and there are additional fees for each class. The couple is responsible for

scheduling these classes in sufficient time to complete all classes within the 9 month time frame of the marriage preparation period. **Failure to do so may result in the postponement of your wedding.**

### **3. Information and Documents Required to be Married in the Catholic Church**

In order to be married in the Catholic Church at least one of the couple must be a baptized Catholic. The following documents will need to be provided to be included in your marriage file:

1) Current copies of your baptismal certificates. The baptismal certificate must be current, contain the parish seal and, ideally, contain notations of other sacraments received. If one of the couple is not Catholic, but baptized in another religion, a copy of that baptismal certificate must be obtained as well. If one of the couple is not baptized, additional paperwork is completed.

2) Annulment letter or Nullity Decree - If one of the couple has a prior marriage, a copy of any annulment letter, nullity decree or dispensation is needed, along with a certified copy of any divorce decree. A prior marriage which has not been properly annulled or dispensed will cause a postponement of your wedding.

3) Death Certificate - If one of the couple was previously married and your former spouse is deceased, a copy of the death certificate of the former spouse is needed.

4) Arizona Civil Marriage License – A marriage license from the State of Arizona is required. Information for obtaining a marriage license is available from the Office of the Clerk of the Superior Court by calling or visiting their website at

<https://www.clerkofcourt.maricopa.gov/records/marriage-licenses-passports/marriage-licenses> .

5) Prenuptial Inquiries and Witness Affidavits of Free Status will be completed prior to the wedding.

6) Dispensations or Permissions – If one of the couple is not Catholic or has a prior marriage, additional paperwork is needed in order to be married in the Catholic Church.

7) Convalidation – For couples who are civilly married and are seeking marriage in the church, in addition to baptismal certificates, a certified copy of your civil marriage license is needed.

**NOTE: Failure to provide the necessary documents may result in the postponement of your wedding. Couples preparing at a parish/diocese other than St. Francis are responsible for ensuring their marriage file is properly routed to St. Francis at least 3 weeks prior to their wedding date.**

### **4. Planning Your Liturgy**

One of your final steps will be to plan your liturgy. You will need to decide whether your ceremony will be a Nuptial Mass or the Rite of Marriage outside of Mass. You will need to select a presider as well. St. Francis has priests and deacons who are available to witness weddings. You may also have a visiting priest or deacon from outside the parish, witness your wedding. If you select a visiting clergyman, he will need to obtain a delegation letter from our pastor for permission to witness your wedding at St. Francis. **If a visiting clergyman will witness the wedding, it is the responsibility of the couple to share the information in these guidelines with the visiting priest or deacon.**

During this time you will also meet with our liturgy planners and music ministers who will provide you with selections of readings, blessings, prayers of the faithful and music for your liturgy. You will also discuss the manner in which your wedding will be conducted, and any additional options you may wish to have, such as the lasso or unity candle.

Provided with these guidelines is a general outline of the order of the ceremony.

### **5. The Rehearsal and Ceremony**

A Catholic marriage is a sacrament and, as such, nothing should be planned that will lessen or detract from the sacramental and religious aspect of the ceremony. Please keep this in mind when discussing your ceremony with florists, photographers, wedding consultants and any others who may be assisting you with your wedding.

**a. Time:**

Weddings are scheduled at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. on **Saturdays** and typically last one hour. **Weddings are not scheduled the weekend after Thanksgiving or on the weekends of Palm Sunday and Easter. Scheduling of weddings during the Christmas Season is at the discretion of the parish.** You will have ½ hour before and after your scheduled time for any set up or photos you may wish to take (i.e. 12:30 – 2:30 for a 1 p.m. wedding and 2:30 – 4:30 for a 3 p.m. wedding.) It is important that these time frames be honored as there are often other services and Masses scheduled in the church. **If your wedding is scheduled for 1 p.m., the wedding party must be at the church at 12:30 p.m. but no earlier. If your wedding is scheduled for 3 p.m., the wedding party must be at the church at 2:30 p.m., but no earlier.** Likewise no flowers or other decorations may be delivered prior to 12:30 p.m. for a 1 p.m. wedding or prior to 2:30 p.m. for a 3 p.m. wedding. There are other Masses and services which take place in the church as well, so we ask that you respect these other services, as well as the time and effort our staff must put in to transition between Masses and services. If your wedding is scheduled for 3 p.m., please be aware that reconciliation/confession takes place in the back of the church on Saturdays from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Those attending reconciliation do not interfere with your wedding, and we ask that you not interfere with those going to reconciliation.

Rehearsals are generally scheduled for the Friday prior to your wedding from either 3 – 4 p.m., 4 - 5 p.m., or 5:00 – 6:00 p.m., depending on scheduling of the Church. In order for your rehearsal to start on time, please arrive 15 minutes early for your rehearsal. Rehearsals must conclude by 6:30 p.m. as there are other services scheduled in the church. All of the people who will be in the wedding, such as readers, groomsmen, bridesmaids, ushers, flower girls and ring bearers, must be at the rehearsal. **Please provide your marriage license to the marriage coordinators prior to your wedding or bring your marriage license to the rehearsal and provide it to the wedding coordinator. \*\*\*Failure to provide a marriage license may result in the postponement of your wedding.**

Please be prompt for both your rehearsal and wedding. There are many other activities scheduled in the church on weekends. In order to keep things running smoothly, please do not intrude into the time of others, including the priest and other staff members. **Being late for your wedding may result in elimination of some options in your ceremony such as the Unity Candle, Lasso, Coins and/or Flowers to Mary, at the discretion of your presider. Additionally, being late for your wedding could reduce or eliminate the time allotted for photographs after your ceremony, at the discretion of the SFX wedding coordinator.**

**b. Wedding Coordinator:**

Our wedding coordinator will assist the couple with the details of the rehearsal and wedding ceremony. She will take care of coordinating the rehearsal and the wedding. She will line up the wedding party; ensure that everything goes off on time; that everyone is in place to begin the ceremony; and that the ceremony runs smoothly. If you have employed your own wedding consultant, please advise your wedding consultant that her/his services will not be needed in the Church.

**c. Music:**

Because a wedding is the celebration of a Sacrament of the Church, the music must be appropriate for the liturgy and in good taste. Music for your wedding should be chosen properly, as music is for Mass, and therefore, purely secular music is not an appropriate choice. A list of your music selections must be provided to and approved by our Music Director. Outside musicians and singers are not typically permitted. Use of St. Francis musicians/cantors is the first option. However, if you wish to have an outside musician or singer/cantor at your wedding, this option must be discussed with and approved by our Music Director. Couples are responsible for the fee due to any approved outside musicians. Our Music Director must approve the music of any outside musicians to ensure that it is liturgically appropriate. If use of outside musicians is permitted by our Music Director, please note that our Music Director or a parish staff member must still be present at your ceremony to ensure proper use of the equipment and sound system.

If the couple wishes to have Mariachis provide music for their ceremony, the couple must use one of the groups approved by St. Francis. A list of those groups will be provided upon request.

Outside musicians may not independently use or set up the music or sound equipment. Outside musicians may use equipment provided in the Church but CANNOT move any of the preset Church equipment. Our Music Director will need to coordinate with any outside musicians.

Our Music Director has a variety of selections appropriate for all aspects of the wedding. You must contact our Music Director, Nick Garza at [nick.garza@sfxphx.org](mailto:nick.garza@sfxphx.org) or 602-212-4507 to arrange any music for your wedding.

**d. Environment and Flowers:**

The environment in the church is based on the liturgical season and cannot be altered for a wedding. Flower arrangements are allowed on 2 pedestals in front of the altar. No flowers are allowed on the altar. **Additionally, no flowers, bows, bubbles, candles or other decorations are allowed on the pews or in the aisles. Flowers should arrive at the church ½ hour before the wedding.** The couple is responsible for informing their florist of this timing. Any flowers should be taken from the Church by the couple or wedding party member after the ceremony.

Due to safety, liability and cleaning concerns, **no rice, birdseed, bubbles, flower petals, confetti, aisle runners or any similar material is permitted either inside or outside the church.** Additionally, no alcoholic beverages are permitted either in or on the church grounds at either the rehearsal or at the wedding. The bride, groom and any members of the wedding party are not to consume alcohol prior to the rehearsal or ceremony.

Due to other services and Masses in the Church, **NO receiving lines** are permitted after the ceremony. Please plan to have any receiving line at your reception.

**e. Cultural Options:**

The Unity Candle or Lasso and Coins, and Flowers to Mary are options available to you if you wish to incorporate them into your ceremony. Please advise us at the time of your liturgy planning if you intend to incorporate one or more of these options into your ceremony.

**f. Wedding Party:**

Please inform the wedding coordinator of the number of attendants you will have participating in the ceremony. Please note that there is **a limit of no more than 10 couples** for the wedding party. This includes bridesmaids, groomsmen, parents, grandparents, padrinos, junior bridesmaids or any others the couple may wish to process into the Church. The attendants will be seated in the front pews for a majority of the ceremony.

Flower girls and ring bearers are a wonderful addition to the ceremony. Please keep the ages of any children participating in your ceremony in mind when making those selections. The aisle in St. Francis is very long and often intimidating for small children. **If your flower girls and ring bearers are under the age of 5, they must be accompanied up the aisle by an adult.**

Please designate someone from your wedding party or a family member to walk through the church after the ceremony and check each pew for any items that might have been mistakenly left by one of your guests. Guests often leave purses, wraps and cameras in the pews.

**g. Dressing Rooms:**

There is a waiting area available for the bride in the primary women's restroom located in the parish hall. These areas are suitable for quick touch ups and for use as waiting areas. This room is not large enough for the bride to get completely ready. There are no other rooms available in the church for the wedding party to wait. The bride, groom and wedding party should come to the church already dressed.

**h. Photographers/Videographers:**

We understand the importance of preserving your wedding ceremony on film or video. The couple should inform their photographers of the sacramental nature of the ceremony. **Photographers and video personnel must be discreet and respectful during the ceremony** so a prayerful spirit prevails throughout the entire ceremony.

During the celebration of Marriage, stationary video equipment may be set up in designated areas only.

**At no time** during the ceremony is any photography or video permitted in the middle aisle, from the front row of pews, in the sanctuary (inside the communion rail) or from the choir loft.

**At no time** may any photography equipment, such as tripods, block any of the aisles of the Church. Tripods may be located in the front row of the side section of pews. Tripods may not be moved around the church. The aisles must remain clear. Photographers must remain with their equipment. **No drones are permitted either inside or outside the church.**

With the exception of the entrance procession, photographers are permitted **on the side aisles of the church only and at least 4 pews from the front pew of the church.**

Photographers should not interfere with any guests, the wedding party, the celebrant or the ceremony. **NO** photographs are permitted inside the Church prior to the start of the wedding.

With the exception of the entrance procession, additional lighting, flash photography, including cell phone cameras, is **NOT permitted** during the wedding ceremony by either professional photographers or wedding guests.

The couple is responsible for informing photographers and guests of this restriction. Discrete photographs are allowed without a flash.

Photographers are not permitted to stop members of the wedding party as they process down the aisle. There will be only one recessional at the end of the ceremony.

NO photographs are permitted on the grounds of Brophy College Preparatory (i.e. the large grassy area and buildings to the south of St. Francis church).

**The couple is responsible for providing a copy of our Photography and Video Policy to your photographer/videographer and returning a signed copy to the church. A copy of the Photography and Video policy is provided with these guidelines.**

***ST. FRANCIS NOW OFFERS A LIVE STREAM OPTION FOR YOUR MARRIAGE CEREMONY. THERE IS AN ADDITIONAL FEE FOR THIS SERVICE. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN THE LIVE STREAM OPTION, PLEASE CONTACT JOSH CONDON, OUR MUSIC AND LITURGY DIRECTOR.***

## **6. Fees**

St. Francis does charge a fee for marriage preparation and weddings. The fee for registered parishioners is \$1,400. To be considered a registered parishioner, you need to be registered and active in the parish at least one year prior to your wedding date. The fee for non-parishioners is \$2,000. This is an all inclusive fee. There is no breakdown or adjustment of the fee for individual parts or persons involved in the ceremony. The fee remains the same whether or not you use all of the listed services. The fee includes meetings with a marriage preparation couple who will guide you through the marriage preparation process and be available to answer any questions you may have during the process; a meeting to review the FOCCUS; planning your liturgy and music; music by our music director ( the fee to St. Francis, does not include payment to any outside musicians); assistance of our wedding coordinator at the rehearsal and ceremony; and a presider, if you choose a priest/deacon assigned to St. Francis. If the couple wishes to have a visiting priest/deacon witness the wedding, any stipend for a visiting priest/deacon is the responsibility of the couple. A non-refundable deposit of ¼ of the fee is needed to confirm your wedding date and must be paid within 15 days of reserving your date or 15 days after your initial meeting with our marriage preparation coordinators, whichever is first. The fee must be paid in full 60 days prior to your wedding date. Failure to pay the fee in full 60 days prior to your wedding may result in cancellation of your wedding.

If you will be married at a church other than St. Francis, including Brophy Chapel, the fee for marriage preparation only is \$250.

## **7. Communication and Contact Information:**

In order to ensure continuity and to avoid any misunderstandings, arrangements and details of all aspects of the ceremony are discussed directly with the couple. **Please refrain from having parents, siblings, wedding consultants or any others who may be involved in your ceremony from independently contacting the church.**



### **The Sacrament of Marriage**

**Like the other Sacraments, marriage is a visible sign of grace from God, imparting help and strength to those who receive it. The celebration of Marriage in the Catholic Church is a sacred religious event between the couple and God.**

**We look forward to celebrating this blessed event with you!**

We have received and understand the Wedding Guidelines for St. Francis Xavier Parish and agree to comply with these guidelines; in particular we have read and understand the importance of complying with the items in paragraphs 2) Diocesan classes; 3) documents needed; 5a) time; 5c) music; 5d); environment and flowers; 5h) photography and videography; 6) fees; and 7) communication. We also agree to inform our hired wedding planners, photographers, florists, as well as, family members and others who may be impacted by these guidelines, including outside musicians and visiting priests, if any, of the policies and procedures of St. Francis.

Groom \_\_\_\_\_

Bride \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

It is our hope that we can provide you with information and assistance that will make your wedding day special. If you have questions concerning your wedding, please contact the following:

For Marriage preparation and Liturgy planning:

Dcn. Tom and Sue Klein  
[marriage.prep@sfxphx.org](mailto:marriage.prep@sfxphx.org)  
602-212-4550

For Music Ministry selections:  
Nick Garza  
[nick.garza@sfxphx.org](mailto:nick.garza@sfxphx.org)  
602-212-4507

**St. Francis Xavier Parish**

4715 N. Central Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85012 602-279-9547 [www.sfxphx.org](http://www.sfxphx.org)

Wedding Photography and Video Policy

Due to the sacramental nature of the ceremony, photographers and video personnel must be discrete and respectful during the ceremony so a prayerful spirit prevails throughout the entire ceremony. The following policies are in effect for weddings at St. Francis Xavier Parish:

1) At all times the sacredness of the Church, the surrounding areas and the Sacrament must be respected.

2) Photographers and videographers will not interfere with any guests, the wedding party, the celebrant or the ceremony. **At no time** may any photography equipment, such as tripods, block any of the aisles of the Church. Tripods may be located in the front row of the side section of pews. Tripods may not be moved around the Church. During the celebration of Marriage, **stationary video equipment** may be set up in **designated areas only. The aisles must remain clear.** Photographers must remain with their equipment. **Photography/video of the entrance procession will be done from the center break in the pews, not from the middle aisle or front of the church. NO DRONES are permitted inside or outside the church.**

3) **NO** photographs are permitted inside the Church prior to the start of the ceremony. **At no time during the ceremony is any photography or videography permitted from the middle aisle, in front of the front row of pews, in the sanctuary (inside the communion rail), or from the choir loft.**

4) With the exception of the entrance procession, photographers are permitted **on the side aisles of the church only and at least 4 pews from the front pew of the church.**

5) With the exception of the entrance procession, additional lighting, flash photography, including cell phone cameras, is **NOT permitted** during the wedding ceremony. Photographs are permitted without a flash.

6) Photographers and videographers are not permitted to stop members of the wedding party as they process down the aisle. **DO NOT block any aisles.** There will be only one recessional at the end of the ceremony.

7) NO photos are permitted on the grounds of Brophy College Preparatory (the large grassy area and buildings to the south of St. Francis church).

8) Flash photography may be used for photos after the wedding ceremony and photos may be taken from the sanctuary after the ceremony.

9) Failure to comply with this policy may result in the photographer and company being excluded from St. Francis Xavier

I/We have read and agree to the terms stated in the Wedding and Video Policy of St. Francis Xavier Parish.

\_\_\_\_\_

Bride

\_\_\_\_\_

Groom

\_\_\_\_\_

Photographer signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

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**Photographer print name**

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Photographer phone/address/email (or attach card)



## **St. Francis Xavier Parish**

4715 N. Central Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85012 602-279-9547 [www.sfxphx.org](http://www.sfxphx.org)

### **Order of Ceremony for Nuptial Mass and Rite of Marriage outside of Mass**

#### **Nuptial Mass**

##### Processional

Bride's Party Entrance  
Bride's Entrance

Greeting  
Opening Prayer  
Gloria

##### Liturgy of the Word

1<sup>st</sup> Reading  
Psalm  
2<sup>nd</sup> Reading  
Gospel  
Homily

##### Rite of Marriage

Declaration of Consent  
Exchange of Vows  
Exchange of Rings  
Cultural Options  
Intercessions

##### Liturgy of the Eucharist

Presentation of the Gifts  
Eucharistic Acclamations  
Memorial Acclamation  
The Lord's Prayer  
The Sign of Peace  
The Fraction Rite  
Communion  
Prayer after Communion

##### Concluding Rite

Nuptial Blessing  
Final Blessing  
Dismissal  
Recessional

#### **Rite of Marriage Outside Mass**

##### Processional

Bride's Party Entrance  
Bride's Entrance

Greeting

Opening Prayer

##### Liturgy of the Word

1<sup>st</sup> Reading  
Psalm  
2<sup>nd</sup> Reading  
Gospel  
Homily

##### Rite of Marriage

Declaration of Consent  
Exchange of Vows  
Exchange of Rings  
Cultural Options  
Intercessions

##### Concluding Rite

Nuptial Blessing  
Final Blessing  
Dismissal  
Recessional