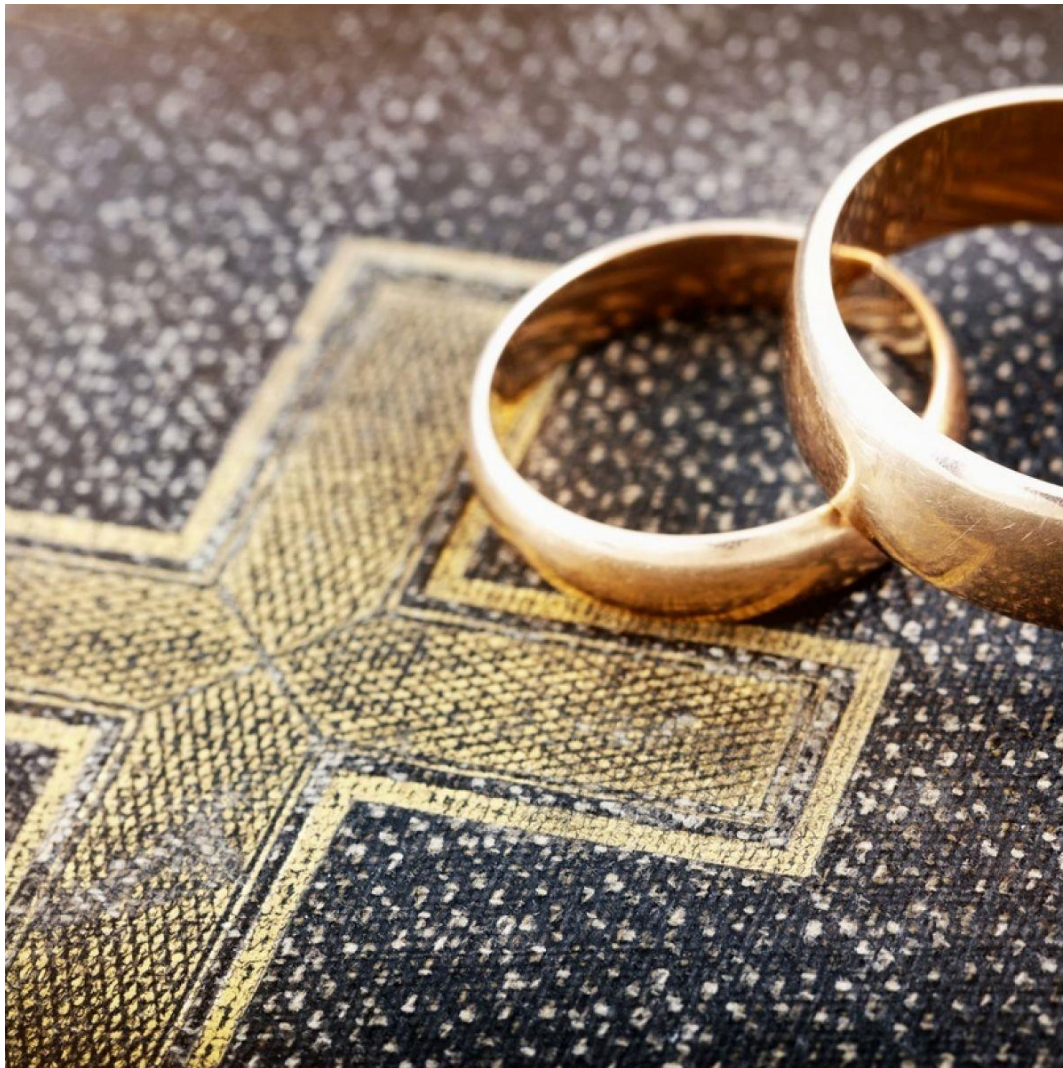


# San Francisco de Asís Wedding Policy Booklet



1600 E. Route 66  
Flagstaff, Arizona  
[www.sfdaparish.org](http://www.sfdaparish.org)

## Welcome

Congratulations on your desire to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage at San Francisco de Asís Parish! We are happy to help you through the preparation process and answer any questions that you may have.

This booklet is designed for the engaged couple to read together and discuss. It includes the policies of marriage preparation set forth by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix as well as the policies of San Francisco de Asís Parish.

Only weddings presided over by a priest or deacon, in good-standing, are permitted in a Catholic Church. At least one of the engaged parties must be a fully initiated and practicing Catholic.

*Married Christians, in virtue of the Sacrament of Matrimony, signify and share in the mystery of that unity and fruitful love which exists between Christ and His Church; they help each other to attain holiness in their married life and in the rearing and education of their children; and they have their own special gift among the people of God.*

*Introduction, Rite of Marriage*

*Updated June 2024*

## Marriage is a Sacrament

Oftentimes our society focuses primarily on the social dimension of marriage. However, we must never forget that marriage is a Sacrament. The love of husband and wife shared in the Sacrament of Marriage makes visible to the world the invisible love of God. The Sacrament of Marriage also delivers the grace that all married couples need to experience and participate in God's divine life of self giving love.

The preparation focuses on three key issues:

1. The sacramentality of the marriage covenant.
2. The relationship between the engaged couple.
3. The couple's relationship with God.

If a fully initiated Catholic is marrying someone outside of the Catholic faith, both parties are required to sign a promise that they will do everything in their power to raise any children from their marriage in the Catholic faith.

Individuals who have been previously married may be required to obtain an annulment (or Lack of Form if the marriage did not occur in a Catholic Church). ***An annulment must be granted before beginning the marriage preparation process.***

## Cohabitation before Marriage

Christ calls His followers to a life that runs radically countercultural to the times in which we live. Couples who live together before they enter the covenant relationship of marriage significantly weaken the bond that God intends for their union. If possible, one member of the cohabitating couples should try to find another place to live, so as to avoid the near occasion of sin (i.e. premarital sex). If this is not possible, the cohabitating couple should be ready to make a commitment to abstain from the marital embrace until they are sacramentally married.

## The use of Contraception during the Marriage Preparation Process and in Marriage

In 1968, Pope Paul VI issued his landmark encyclical letter *Humanae Vitae* (Latin, “Human Life”), which reemphasized the Church’s constant teaching that it is always intrinsically wrong to use contraception to prevent new human beings from coming into existence.

Contraception is “any action which, either in anticipation of the conjugal act [sexual intercourse], or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible” (*Humanae Vitae* 14). This includes sterilization, condoms and other barrier methods, spermicides, coitus interruptus (withdrawal method), the Pill, and all other such methods.

During the Marriage Preparation process you will be required to complete a Natural Family Planning course. Completion of this course will require that the couple not use any type of birth control or contraceptive even if not intended as birth control.

## Essential Components of Marriage Preparation

- ❖ The Bishop of the Diocese of Phoenix has mandated a minimum of nine (9) months for marriage preparation.
- ❖ Components of the program of preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage include but are not limited to:
  - Fully Engaged Pre-nuptial Marriage Inventory, through San Francisco de Asís Parish.
  - Marriage Life-Skills Course, through the Diocese of Phoenix.
  - *God’s Plan for a Joy Filled Marriage*, through the Diocese of Phoenix.
  - Complete a course (4 sessions) in Natural Family Planning, through the Diocese of Phoenix – Office of Natural Planning.
- ❖ It is expected that the couple maintain an active Sacramental life (attend Mass every Sunday, have a regular prayer life etc.) and that the celebration of marriage will be preceded by the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession).

## Convalidations

If you are currently civilly married and would like to enter into the Sacrament of Marriage in the Catholic Church but you are not looking to have a separate Mass, you can consider a more basic liturgy. You can choose a Daily Mass or a weekend Mass that is already scheduled and you and your civil spouse can enter in to the Rite of Marriage (exchanging of vows) during or immediately after the Mass. The minimum requirements for a valid wedding are, a Bishop, Priest or Deacon in Good Standing, a Groom and Bride and two witnesses over the age of 18.

## Necessary Documentation

**All documents must be received from both groom and bride.**

- Certificate of Baptism with notations recently issued in the last 6 months
- Pre-nuptial Inquiry (PNI) – to be completed at initial meeting
- Affidavits of Free Status (2 per person)
- Civil marriage license\*
- Divorce and Annulment paperwork (if necessary)
- Letter of permission (if necessary)
- Dispensation (if necessary)
- Certificates of completion of required courses/retreats

***\*A county issued civil marriage license MUST be obtained before the wedding rehearsal. It is ILLEGAL in the United States for a Catholic priest or deacon to celebrate a wedding without the civil marriage license present.***

***If the couple is not already civilly married then the civil marriage license will be signed by the bride, groom, two witnesses and the celebrant after the nuptial Mass.***

## Location, Date and Time of Weddings

San Francisco de Asís Parish consists of 3 churches.

**1. San Francisco de Asís Church** (seats 1200)

1600 E. Route 66  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001

**2. Our Lady of Guadalupe Chapel** (seats 100)

224 S. Kendrick St.  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001

**3. Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Chapel (High Altar Only)** ( 350)

16 W. Cherry Ave.  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001

The date of the wedding can only be set once the entire wedding fee is paid in full with Sandy Frate, Director of Parishioner Engagement. Before Sandy is able to take payments the couple must read and complete the *Marriage Preparation Agreement* and return it to Sandy. Sandy will then set the date on the parish calendar.

Weddings are typically celebrated on Saturdays at 1 p.m. A maximum of 60 minutes can be set aside for pictures and decorating before and wedding bearing in mind that 15 minutes before the start of the wedding, the wedding party should have finished decorating and be lining up for the wedding to begin. Also, there will be a maximum of 60 minutes after the wedding ends to take photos and clean up all decorations. The wedding start time can be shifted depending on the day of the week and church where the wedding will be celebrated.

The Church's bridal room (depending on the location) may be accessed a maximum of 60 minutes before the wedding. It is absolutely imperative that all individuals connected with the Rite of Marriage arrive at least 60 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the liturgy. This includes the bridal party, parents, readers, etc.

Weddings are not usually celebrated during Lent **(3/5/25 - 4/20/25)** due to the penitential character of this season in the Catholic Church with the exception of RCIA couples.

## Policy on Use of Church Facilities

Following are several requirements for those having their wedding in our parish churches:

- ❖ Catholic Churches are consecrated for the worship of God. Consequently, at all times proper reverence and respect must be maintained. Loud talking and unnecessary noise is always to be avoided.
- ❖ Children must be supervised at all times.
- ❖ The church will be available one hour before and one hour after the wedding ceremony. This is to facilitate time for photos, florist deliveries and arrangement, and musician set-up.
- ❖ Please designate someone to pick up any programs, bows, flowers, or other miscellaneous items in the church immediately following the wedding.
- ❖ Rooms will be made available at different facilities for the wedding party to dress if needed. Designate someone to be responsible for picking up all items belonging to the wedding party from the dressing room(s) when done dressing as doors are left **unlocked** during wedding. The Parish or wedding hostess is not responsible for any valuables left in the dressing room(s).
- ❖ Parking will be available at for San Francisco de Asís Church and Our Lady of Guadalupe Chapel, however we cannot reserve parking at Nativity Chapel downtown due to City of Flagstaff Parking Restrictions.
- ❖ Our Churches are not available for non-Catholic events or weddings in which an ordained Catholic priest or deacon is not the celebrant. You are more than welcome to invite a priest or deacon from your family or parish to celebrate your wedding. A letter of permission must be sent from the priest or deacon's home parish. In this instance, the wedding coordinator is the liaison of the parish and has full authority to carry out the policies.
- ❖ **No food or drink, other than plastic water bottles, may be brought into our parish churches. Smoking and chewing gum are not permitted.**

## Policy on Alcohol Use before the Wedding

The use of alcohol, including champagne, in or around the parish churches or immediately prior to the ceremony, by any of the wedding party or guests will result in the immediate cancellation of the wedding.

**According to Canon Law, alcohol can potentially impeded the marital consent of the Bride, Groom and witnesses which in turn could make the marriage invalid. (c. 1095)**

## Photography and Video

1. Pictures may be taken throughout the wedding; however, flash photography is strictly forbidden during the ceremony. Flash may be used during the procession in and recessional only, as to not distract from the Sacrament.
2. During the procession and recession, the photographer may move freely from the midway point of the pews to the main doors of the church. Flash may be used at this time only.
3. The photographer or videographer is not permitted to be in the sanctuary at any time. This would include the steps leading up to the sanctuary and in front of the tabernacle.
4. The photographer may position himself/herself to the left or the right of the sanctuary or in the middle of the church during the exchange of vows, not distracting or obstructing the view of the people.
5. Roaming cameras are not permitted during the celebration of the Marriage.
6. You will be given a maximum of 60 minutes for photography after the wedding. Flash photography may be used at this time.
7. After pictures have been taken, everyone should begin cleaning up the church and preparing to leave.
8. Please have the photographer contact the wedding coordinator if he/she has any other questions.

## Flowers and Decorations

Floral arrangements must be simple and tasteful. Silk flower petals may be used up the center aisle. Bows for the pews may be used only if they are on a rubber band or plastic “pew clips” or secured with painters tape. The use of push pins, tacks or wires is not permitted on the wood pews or on the walls. A runner down center or side aisle of the church are not permitted. No sort of arch in the front or interior door is allowed. Tea lights, regular or battery operated, are not allowed up the center aisle. Unity candles or any candles with an open flame are not allowed. Sparklers are also not allowed. No existing church decorations, flowers or furnishings may ever be moved. **Please make arrangements for all flowers and décor to be cleaned up and removed after the ceremony.**



## Cultural Customs and Wedding Party

Accommodations can be made for cultural customs that have been approved by the pastor. Please submit your request for approval to parish staff via email **prior to** making any arrangements. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) will always take precedence over customs/desires of the couple preparing for marriage.

**Wedding parties are limited to 5 couples of groomsmen and bridesmaids including the Best Man and Maid of Honor.** Animals are not allowed to be a part of the wedding ceremony.

## Dress Code

**The church is a sacred place and appropriate dress is required.**

If the gowns chosen for the bride or bridal party are sleeveless or have straps less thick than 4 fingers, then a sweater or shawl must be used to cover the shoulders during the wedding ceremony. Any dress that does not have a least capped sleeve or 4 finger straps will need covering for the shoulders. Modesty, particularly when it comes to cleavage, is a virtue that must be observed at all times. No open-cut, low back gown is permitted. Bridesmaid dresses are required to be knee length or longer. Dress shoes are required, no flip-flops, Converse, or athletic shoes are permitted.

Everyone publicly participating in the wedding (wedding party, Lectors, people bringing up the gifts, etc) must present themselves in a way that honors the sacred space that they are in and, by extension, honors the precepts of the Catholic Faith that are upheld in the parish. Therefore, anyone presenting themselves in a way that is not in line with those precepts (people with inappropriate tattoos showing, anyone cross dressing, showing cleavage, etc.) will not be able to publicly participate in the wedding.

If there is any doubt about the appropriateness of dresses, please bring it to the attention of parish staff immediately. **Parish staff and the wedding coordinator reserve the right to say “no” to any wedding party attire.**

## The Wedding Liturgy

The celebration of the Rite of Marriage, whether in the context of the Mass or in the context of a Liturgy of the Word, is part of the official prayer of the Church. While some adaptation of the liturgy is appropriate to meet the particular needs of the couple, families and cultures, the basic elements of the Catholic liturgy must be preserved. **Because of the importance of good liturgy, everything regarding the celebration must be discussed and approved beforehand.**

A wedding coordinator is provided for all wedding liturgies. They are there to help the priest/deacon and the wedding party. They have been trained by the parish and have full authority to implement parish policies. Please give them your utmost respect. The wedding coordinator will meet with the couple approximately 3 months before the wedding.

The wedding coordinator will give the couple a *Together for Life* book to choose the readings for the liturgy in accordance with the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM). Prayerful planning and selection of scriptural readings, Lectors proclaiming the Word, prayers, and blessings add a great deal of meaning to the celebration of marriage. We can provide Lectors for the Liturgy if needed. The marriage of two Catholics should take place within the context of a Nuptial Mass, wherein the couple receives the Body and Blood of the Lord in Holy Communion.

When a Catholic is marrying a non-Catholic, the wedding usually will take place within a Liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion will not be distributed.

Please present your civil wedding license at the rehearsal to the wedding coordinator who will keep it until the wedding and then turn it in to the Parish Office for recording in our church registers. The parish secretary will then forward it to the Clerk of the Superior Court for recording by the County and then they will send it back to the couple.

If you are already civilly married there is no need to bring a copy of your civil license to the ceremony. A copy will be kept in your prenuptial file in the parish office.

## Music

As stated before, your wedding ceremony, first and foremost, is a Catholic liturgy. Music for the wedding, therefore, must be appropriate to a Catholic liturgy. This means that popular secular music is not permitted. CDs, recorded music, videos, and or/slide shows are suited to receptions or rehearsal dinners, and are at no time appropriate in the church. The Catholic understanding of liturgy and worship is one which involves congregational participation; therefore, solo performances should be limited to preludes before the service begins and to a meditation song after communion. The Lord's Prayer is always recited or sung by the entire assembly; it is never done as a solo piece.

Our parish has musicians that are available to you. Please contact our parish office or your wedding coordinator, for contact information. They can put you in touch with the musicians best suited for your celebration. These musicians are active music ministers and familiar with Catholic liturgies which is the preferable arrangement. Guest musicians must have a letter of recommendation from their home parish stating that they are familiar with leading a Catholic liturgy.

We reserve the right to stipend a sound person to assist with sound for a fee of \$50.

## Deliveries

The parish is not responsible for anything that is delivered to any of our 3 churches (flowers, decorations, etc.) All deliveries to the church should not be made more than one hour before the ceremony. Be aware that there is no staff at Our Lady of Guadalupe or Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Chapels. The parish office at San Francisco de Asís is not open on Saturdays.

The office staff will not sign for any deliveries so you must have someone here if you are expecting deliveries.

## Wedding Fees and Stipends

### **Full Mass or Liturgy of the Word**

**\$550** - registered SFdA parishioner of six (6) months or more, have a record of regular Mass attendance, membership in ministry, and evidence of financial support to the Church.

- ❖ \$100 - Wedding Coordinator
- ❖ \$200 - Musician
- ❖ \$250 - Church User Fee

**\$750** – local non SFdA parishioner

- ❖ \$100 - Wedding Coordinator
- ❖ \$200 - Musician
- ❖ \$450 - Church User Fee

**\$850** – visiting couple

- ❖ \$200 - Wedding Coordinator
- ❖ \$200 - Musician
- ❖ \$450 - Church User Fee

### **Convalidation**

**\$150** - active, registered SFdA parishioner of six (6) months or more

The Church wedding fee is **due in full** in order to schedule a date. If the wedding is cancelled, all but \$100 will be refunded directly to the person who paid the fee. Payments can be made online at [www.sfdaparish.org](http://www.sfdaparish.org) under the “Donate” tab. **Credit card payments must include a 2.2% fee (\$153.30, \$562.10, \$766.50, \$868.70).** A check or Money Order payable to *SFdA Parish* can be mailed to the parish office.

**Wedding preparation for couples preparing in our parish but marrying at another parish outside of Flagstaff is \$150.**

### **Stipends**

Stipends to the priest and/or deacon are not required and any stipends are a freewill offering. Any cash or checks would be payable directly to those individuals. Fees to the musicians are taken from the total wedding fee unless the couple chooses their own musicians that have been approved. The couple will pay those musicians directly.

Information regarding reserving the Upper Room for receptions can be obtained by emailing [facilities@sfdaparish.org](mailto:facilities@sfdaparish.org).

Important Notes

After reading though this booklet and having has all your questions answered by parish staff, the couple is required to sign the Marriage Preparation Agreement (separate sheet) and return it to the parish office within one month of the initial meeting according to the due date notes. This agreement will be signed by Fr. Dan Connealy and then the couple will be able to pay the wedding fee and schedule the wedding date.

Please remember that this agreement is to help facilitate your understanding of the process. Throughout the entire wedding preparation process it remains entirely the responsibility of the couple to maintain communication with parish staff, which includes updating the status of their progress via email or phone.

\*\*\*\*\*

**For Preparation Couples Only:** Since your file needs to be prepared and sent to the church you will be marrying in, communication and timeliness are important. **Please be aware that the following information must be in your prenuptial file within 45 days of the initial meeting:**

- Confirmed location of the Catholic Church where the wedding will take place; include parish name, address, city, state, (arch)diocese and any other pertinent information.
- Date and time of the wedding
- Name of presiding clergy and what parish he is stationed at.

If the information is not received, your file may be placed on hold. The file must be complete and finalized six (6) weeks prior to the wedding if it will take place in the continental United States. If it will take place outside of the continental United States it needs to be completed three (3) months prior to the wedding date.



# THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PHOENIX



## **Pastor:**

Fr. Dan Connealy (928)779-1341 ext.115 [frconnealy@sfdaparish.org](mailto:frconnealy@sfdaparish.org)

## **Director of Parishioner Engagement:**

Sandy Frate, (928)779-1341 ext.121 [sfrate@sfdaparish.org](mailto:sfrate@sfdaparish.org)

## **Fully Engaged Mentors:**

- ❖ Deacon Jeff & Jenn Hartin (928)600-3145
- ❖ Deacon Jim & Therese Myers (928)266-5654
- ❖ Gabriel and Lorena Trejo (928)607-6324 (Spanish)

## **SFdA Celebrant List:**

- ❖ Fr. Dan Connealy, Pastor (English/Spanish)
- ❖ Fr. Michael Gilbert, Associate Pastor (English/Spanish)
- ❖ Deacon Greg Blanchard
- ❖ Deacon Jeff Hartin
- ❖ Deacon Ron Johnson (English/Spanish)
- ❖ Deacon Jim Myers (English/Spanish)
- ❖ Deacon Buck Olberding

## **Websites:**

[www.phxmarriageprep.org](http://www.phxmarriageprep.org)

[www.phxmarriageprep.org/es/inicio](http://www.phxmarriageprep.org/es/inicio)

[www.foryourmarriage.org](http://www.foryourmarriage.org)

[www.portumatrimonio.org](http://www.portumatrimonio.org)

# Nuptial Blessing

O God, who by your mighty power created all things out of nothing, and, when you had set in place the beginnings of the universe, formed man and woman in your own image, making the woman an inseparable helpmate to the man, that they might no longer be two, but one flesh, and taught that what you were pleased to make one must never be divided;

O God, who consecrated the bond of Marriage by so great a mystery that in the wedding covenant you foreshadowed the Sacrament of Christ and his Church; O God, by whom woman is joined to man and the companionship they had in the beginning is endowed with the one blessing not forfeited by original sin nor washed away by the flood. Look now with favor on these your servants, joined together in Marriage, who ask to be strengthened by your blessing. Send down on them the grace of the Holy Spirit and pour your love into their hearts, that they may remain faithful in the Marriage covenant.

May the grace of love and peace abide in your daughter, and let her always follow the example of those holy women whose praises are sung in the Scriptures. May her husband entrust his heart to her, so that, acknowledging her as his equal and his joint heir to the life of grace, he may show her due honor and cherish her always with the love that Christ has for his Church. And now, Lord, we implore you: may these your servants hold fast to the faith and keep your commandments; made one in the flesh, may they be blameless in all they do; and with the strength that comes from the Gospel, may they bear true witness to Christ before all; may they be blessed with children, and prove themselves virtuous parents, who live to see their children's children. And grant that, reaching at last together the fullness of years for which they hope, they may come to the life of the blessed in the Kingdom of Heaven. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen