



The Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi

P.O. Box 2127, Santa Fe, NM 87504-2127



www.cbsfa.org

Policies and Procedures for the Sacrament of Marriage

While careful planning in advance is necessary for your wedding day, special focus and attention should be given to nurturing your relationship of Love, thereby continuing to deepen and strengthen the Love that God has given you for each other. As the program Engaged Encounter puts it, “A Wedding is a Day... A Marriage is a Lifetime.” The Sacrament of Marriage should be approached in a spirit of prayer, for marriage is an unconditional love that Jesus has for all of us. When you treat each other with patience, kindness, forgiveness, honesty, faithfulness, etc., your love will be a sign to the rest of the world – a sign of God’s faithful love for all people. These policies of the Archdiocese and/or of our parish are intended to assist you in your pursuit of a long-lasting loving marriage.

Preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage

1. **Parish affiliation:** Either the potential bride or groom must be registered, participating member of a parish longer than four months prior to beginning the prenuptial process. The Rite of the Sacrament of Marriage is after all, a Catholic event, and the ceremony is to be witnessed by the community to which you belong (see #13).
2. **Age:** No arrangements for marriage will be started until the bride and groom are at least 18 years of age. If younger parents must accompany them.
3. **Preparation Time:** There is a minimum six-month preparation period for couples being married. That is, from the time a couple fills out preliminary papers with the priest until the actual wedding date. Six months or more is recommended in order to have more time in which to continue your growth as a couple, plan the details of your wedding, newly combined budget, honeymoon, place to live afterwards, etc. Time invested during engagement to plan your future life together will ease many of the adjustments in your first year of marriage. This waiting period may be extended for personal or pastoral reasons. There may be exceptional reasons to change this to be approved by the Pastor.
4. **Place of Wedding:** If you wish to be married in the Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi, it is important that you do not contact a printer for invitations, make arrangements for receptions, etc., until you have met and set the wedding date and time with the Marriage Coordinator of our parish.
5. **Initial Paperwork:** Certain pre-nuptial forms must be filled out. In preparation for this, both of you must furnish a **recently issued** (within six months) baptismal certificate from the church where you were baptized. Please tell the person who fills it out that it is for a marriage so the proper notations on back of the certificate may be completed. If not a Cathedral Basilica Parishioner, your parish must be responsible for all the paperwork.
6. **Freedom to Marry Forms:** Two relatives or very close friends of each of you have to come to the parish to fill out forms with the appropriate member of the pastoral team, or it can be mailed to those people living out of town to be fill out by their local priest. This is to prove the freedom of each of you to marry.
7. **The FOCCUS Questionnaire:** As soon as the preliminary forms are filled out, you will need to make an appointment to complete the FOCCUS Questionnaire with the Marriage Coordinator. FOCCUS stands for “Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study.” This is not a test.
8. **Marriage Preparation Programs:** Both of you must participate in our marriage preparation program *For Better & For Ever* and have a Sponsor Couple. These programs are designed to enhance your relationship of love and help you prepare for the lifelong commitment of marriage, recognizing that your relationship has top priority. This should be done as soon as possible. (Completed no later than two months before the wedding.)
9. **Natural Family Planning:** Learn about the Creighton Model Fertility Care System. Must attend one (1) intro class session. Please contact Helen Quintana 505.470.7425.



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10. Other Documents Required:

- a) A Dispensation from the Archdiocese of Santa Fe is needed if either the bride or groom is not Catholic. This has to be completed at least two months before the wedding date.
- b) A Marriage license from the State of New Mexico must be obtained from a County Clerk's office. One month before the wedding, deliver to the parish office wedding coordinator. The license must be recorded in the parish office register and then we will mail it to the county office for recording. The county will mail it back to you at whatever address you provide us.
- c) Other paperwork may be required in special cases, i.e.: If there was a previous marriage on either side or both, or if one or both are widowed.

11. Preparing the Wedding Liturgy: Read the guidelines in the separate handout entitled Preparing the Wedding Liturgy. Please call the Pastoral Associate of Liturgy (505.955.8867) at the Cathedral office to set up an appointment to plan the particulars of your wedding liturgy and music.

12. Fees: In the spirit of Christian charity, it is the common practice that an offering be made to the parish in responsibility for services rendered and to assist covering the cost of marriage preparation materials, utilities and church personnel.

Half of the fees are due at the time that you reserve the date for your wedding. (It can be set up to one year in advance)

- For registered parishioners who show their support by regularly using their offering envelopes, the fee is **\$350.00**.
- For registered parishioners who do not contribute regularly (use their offering envelopes), the fee is **\$450.00**.
- If you are a registered, practicing, parishioner of a parish within the Archdiocese of Santa Fe the fee is **\$500.00**.
- If you are not practicing parishioner of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe the fee is **\$900.00**.
- If your wedding is somehow cancelled you must immediately inform the Marriage Coordinator (505.955.8862). You must inform the Cathedral Basilica of the cancellation as soon as possible to have ½ of the marriage fee refunded. If the Cathedral Basilica is notified less than one (1) month from the date of your wedding, there will be no refund.

The money is used strictly for the parish. It is customary to give the priest an honorarium (suggested \$150.00). If you would like to give a gift to any other church personnel that is entirely up to your discretion.

Fees for Music Ministers & Hospitality are not part of the church fee.

- **They are as follows:**
 - * Organist - \$250.00
 - * Cantor - \$250.00
 - * Additional Accompaniment - TBD
 - * Minister of Hospitality (Usher) Fee - \$50.00 per person (usually 2-3)

13. Wedding for non-parishioners: It is Archdiocesan policy not to do weddings for non-Catholics. We welcome Catholics from other parishes to celebrate their Wedding at the Cathedral provided they adhere to the guidelines. Your parish must be responsible for all the paperwork and preparation. This must be in the hands of the Cathedral Basilica office no later than two months prior to your wedding date.

14. Wedding Planners: If you choose to hire a wedding planner, please be aware that we DO NOT work with wedding planners. We deal only with the couple themselves. Please also advise your wedding planner, that their presence is not needed at the wedding rehearsal or the church wedding itself.

***Use the pink checklist to keep track of all this. You can accomplish this over a period of time. Call us if you have any questions or concerns (505.955.8862). We DO care about you and are praying for you.