



The Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi

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www.cbsfa.org

Preparing the Wedding Liturgy

Preliminary Considerations:

It is in the spirit of charity and Christian simplicity that we have drawn these guidelines for our parishioners who are planning weddings. Christ invites us to be meek and humble in our actions, and the tradition of the Church teaches us to be modest in the celebrations of the Sacraments. We should keep in mind that our faith in the Lord's presence as we celebrate special moments in our Christian growth is the important aspect of our celebration. We have taken this into consideration in creating these guidelines for the celebration of weddings in our parish and we invite all our parishioners to understand these norms in relation to the Gospel. We hope that you see in them a way of celebrating marriage that is appropriate with the teachings of Christ and His Church.

Spiritual Preparation:

Catholics fully participate in the celebration of the Wedding in the context of the Holy Mass. When the bride and groom receive Holy Communion, they fulfill Christ's command to eat His Body and drink His Blood. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, communicants in the wedding party should not be conscious of grave sin, have fasted for one hour and seek to live in charity and love with their neighbors, as in the case at any Eucharistic celebration. Persons conscious of serious sin must first be reconciled with God and the Church through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) is available every Saturday at 3:00 p.m. in the church, or by appointment. What better gift could you give your spouse or God on your wedding day than a heart purified by the mercy of God?

In cases of mixed marriages (Catholic marrying a non-Catholic), the Mass may not be celebrated. This is due, in part, to the fact that Marriage is a celebration of unity and many non-Catholic relatives and friends would not be able to understand or participate in the Eucharist.

For those couples celebrating the wedding rite within the context of Mass, all are welcome to attend and pray with you. Unfortunately, one consequence of the sad divisions in Christianity is that we cannot extend to non-Catholics a general invitation to receive Communion. Catholics believe that the Eucharist is an action of the celebrating community signifying a oneness which does not yet exist, and for which we must all pray.

Choosing the Time and Date:

Wedding ceremonies may be weekday afternoons up to 4:00 p.m. or evenings at 6:00 p.m., Saturdays **only** at 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. They are not to take place on Sundays and Holy Days, because the Church has a different focus for worship on these days (will not be negotiated). There may be other dates that are closed due to Cathedral events, please check with the Marriage Coordinator.

Rehearsal time and date should be scheduled when planning the wedding date. Normally, the rehearsal is scheduled for the evening before at a time when the church is available. **Only those serving a ministerial role in the ceremony should come to the rehearsal.** All members of the wedding party, ushers, readers, etc. should attend the rehearsal, so that all have a clear idea of places, decorum, and the order of the ceremony. Please be PROMPT for the rehearsal, as other rehearsals may also be occurring that evening.

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 planners, that their presence is not needed at the wedding rehearsal or the church wedding itself.

Attendants:

You may have up to (5) couples as witnesses or attendants, in addition to the Best Man and Maid of Honor. There is usually one couple acting as witnesses to the wedding ceremony (padrinos - best man and maid of honor). Only one couple (padrinos - best man and maid of honor) signs the marriage license. Any exceptions to this policy must be cleared with the pastor.

If you have a flower girl (1) and/or ring bearer (1), they should be at least six (6) years of age, and be able to walk up the aisle without any assistance.



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Liturgy/Music Planning:

You are the primary ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage which you are going to receive. The bride and the groom plan the Wedding Mass or ceremony, using the book *Celebrating Marriage* given to you when you secured the date for your wedding at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi, along with the Cathedral Basilica Liturgy and Music Planner. Please contact the Pastoral Associate of Liturgy by phone (505.955.8867) or by e-mail (liturgy@cbsfa.org) for an appointment to plan the wedding liturgy. You should plan to meet with the Pastoral Associate of Liturgy & Pastoral Associate of Music (505.955.8870 or musicdirector@cbsfa.org) as soon as you have completed your paperwork with the Marriage Coordinator. **Do not contract musicians for your wedding through secular wedding coordinators before this meeting.** The Cathedral staff will help you choose qualified liturgical musicians for your ceremony, whether your style of music is Contemporary, Spanish, English, or Classical music. Many musicians schedule weddings far in advance, therefore a meeting early in the process of planning your wedding is crucial.

All of the liturgical information for the priest, Cathedral wedding coordinators, musicians, etc. should be on the Cathedral Liturgy and Music Planner. The Liturgy and Music Planner should be returned to the Pastoral Associate of Liturgy one month prior to your wedding so that it can be distributed to the priest, wedding coordinators, and musicians can be contracted.

Decorum:

The church building is sacred to this community's life of worship. You and your party are asked to maintain an attitude of reverence and respect during the rehearsal and the wedding itself. **Appropriate dress is required of all who attend weddings in the Cathedral. Bridal gowns and bridesmaid dresses must be modest and appropriate. Strapless, backless, or dresses with exposed shoulders and/or plunging necklines must be covered by a shawl for the wedding Liturgy. All dresses and skirts must be no more than (2") two inches above the knee in length, NO EXCEPTIONS. Guests serving as ministers of the Liturgy such as readers, etc. must also follow this dress code.** A shawl will be provided for any member of the wedding party or minister who is inappropriately dressed.

The consumption of alcoholic beverages is inappropriate in conjunction with a service of worship. Accordingly, the consumption of alcohol in any form in or around the church, whether before or during the rehearsal or wedding, is absolutely forbidden. If the bride or her maid of honor and/or groom and his best man smell of alcohol and/or appear to be under the influence, the wedding will not take place.

Church Decorations:

Decorations are optional, as churches already provide a beautiful atmosphere. Any decorations you plan should reflect two basic demands of good worship: quality and appropriateness. Quality invites honesty and genuineness. Appropriateness means that decorations should serve to foster worship, not detract from the ritual action of the prayerful marriage ceremony. Please review this with the Pastoral Associate of Liturgy, prior to wedding.

Existing Church Furnishings: Please respect existing church furnishings, even those for special seasons of the year, such as Advent, Easter, etc. Do not move things without permission. Please ask a particular relative or friend to see to it that everything is carefully returned to its place and cleaned up following the ceremony.

Flowers: If desired, two floral arrangements may be acquired to beautify the sanctuary for the celebration. The flower arrangements should not be placed on the altar. (You will notice that this is standard procedure at every Mass, so that the congregation can focus attention on Christ's Presence in the Holy Eucharist on the altar.) Please make sure the proper stands are provided by the flower shop for the flower arrangements. One person should be in charge of placing the empty boxes of flowers in the dumpster after the wedding.

Candles: Only proper altar candles will be used for weddings. Candelabra are used only for Benediction, not weddings. If you choose to have the Unity Candle ceremony, you will be responsible to purchase your own candles (3), the holder is provided.

Runners: Our experience has taught us that plastic, cloth or paper runners in the center aisle are dangerous. Because of this reason – the danger of tripping – runners will not be allowed.

Flower Petals, Rice, Birdseed, Etc.: Keeping in mind our starving brothers and sisters throughout the world, no rice will be wasted by throwing it after Mass inside or outside. The throwing of birdseed and flower petals also poses some challenges for safety and clean-up reasons, and therefore is not allowed.

Photographer & Videographer :

The photographer(s) should check with the priest in the sacristy before the ceremony begins for guidelines. Pictures may be taken after the Mass for one-half hour only, since another ceremony may be scheduled. Nothing in the sanctuary may be moved. The photographer(s) must be respectful of the sacred space and sacramental event that is taking place. The photographer(s) movement must be kept to minimum and not impede the flow of the ceremony. **Photographer/videographer should be professionally and properly attired. Please have your Videographer set up in a stationary spot. Neither photographer/videographer are allowed in the sanctuary (wooden floor area).**

Options for the Wedding Liturgy

You may choose one or more (or none) of the following ceremonies for your wedding liturgy. The Rite of Marriage is rich enough with adding many superfluous additions. Choose what has the most meaning for you as a couple.

Worship Aids: Wedding guests are handed this at the door. This could contain the order of the service, a citation of readings chosen, name of clergy, organist, cantor, attendants and perhaps a personal message for the bride and groom. Guests may keep this simple worship aid as a memento of your wedding. Guests from other faith traditions may be very appreciative so that they know the flow of the liturgy and are able to participate. Many fine examples can be found in your *Celebrating Marriage* book. Each couple is to assume the responsibility of designing and printing their own worship aids if desired.

Procession Entrance: The Rite of Marriage calls for the couple to enter with their parents.

Unity Candle: After the vows and the ring ceremony, the bride and groom each light a candle, then approach the “unity” or wedding candle together, lighting the one candle simultaneously. The two individual candles are left burning symbolizing the life from which you came. The unity candle, symbolizes the two persons now become one in marriage. If you choose this option, religious stores sell these candles in a set that you can keep and use later for anniversaries. You do not need to purchase the unity candle stand.

The Arras: The Arras is a tradition among some families of the Southwest that has its origins in Spain. The groom gives the bride coins accompanied by words of his pledge to love and care for her. She, in turn, says word of acceptance. This also takes place after the vows and ring ceremony.

The Lazo Ceremony: Another custom at this time in ritual is the symbol of the laso. The laso looks like a double rosary, connected in the middle. It is placed on the shoulders of both bride and groom as a symbol that they are linked together as one. It is worn during the remainder of the ceremony.

Offertory Procession: Besides bringing forth the bread, wine for the Eucharistic celebration, some couples choose to have a basket of non-perishable foods brought forth to be given to the poor. This symbolizes their belief that the love they share in their marriage is the kind of love that overflows to help others. In other words, their love is outward reaching. The basket will be provided and the parish will see to it that the food goes to the poor.

Prayers of the Faithful: The bridal couple may choose to write their own Prayers of the Faithful, and even read the prayer themselves at the wedding. You may also choose to have the standard ones read. Remember that the main goal here is to pray for others.

Honor to Mary: Following Communion, the bridal couple goes to kneel at the feet of the statue of Mary, to pray in silence for a good family life, the kind that Mary and Joseph provided for Jesus. Some couples place simple flowers by the statue or have a song played/sung during this time, such as the “Ave Maria.” No Artificial Flowers (plastic or silk).

Archdiocese of Santa Fe Wedding Music Guidelines

The celebration of the sacrament of Matrimony is one of the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church. As such, the marriage ceremony must maintain the norms of good sacramental liturgy. A pre-eminent aspect of good liturgy is the use of liturgical music within the rites of the Church. In order to ensure that church norms are followed, the planning of the Rite of Matrimony and the choosing of appropriate liturgical music should be done by the couple, the presider, and the parish music minister. Visiting priests should observe all church norms as well as established parish policy.

Music chosen for a wedding ceremony must bring all who attend the wedding into full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy. With this in mind, **the following is a list of times when music is essential to the wedding liturgy:**

The Liturgy of the Word

- Responsorial Psalm
- Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia or Lenten Acclamation)

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Holy, Holy
- Memorial Acclamation
- Lamb of God
- Great Amen
- Communion Song

At all these times, the music is to be sung by all gathered, not just by a music group, choir or a cantor. In order to foster participation, a rehearsal for the wedding assembly should be held immediately before beginning the liturgy.

There are other moments when music can be used prayerfully at liturgy.

The Liturgy of the Word

- Processional (usually instrumental)
- Gathering Song (sung by all)
- Invocation to the Prayers of the Faithful (i.e. Lord, hear our prayer) (sung by all)

The Rite of Marriage

- Acclamation after marriage vows and/or rings have been exchanged (sung by all)

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Preparation of Gifts (can be instrumental, sung by cantor, or music group)
- Hymn of Praise (can be sung after communion by all, music group or cantor)
- Recessional (usually instrumental, but can be sung by music group, cantor or all)

Appropriate Musical Choices

The Church offers this guidance when choosing particular music for any wedding liturgy. “Particular decisions about choice and placement of wedding music should grow out of three judgments...

- The liturgical judgment: Is the music’s text, form, placement and style congruent with the nature of liturgy?
- The musical judgment: Is the music technically, aesthetically and expressively good, irrespective of musical idiom or style?
- The pastoral judgment: Will it help this assembly to pray?” (*Liturgical Music Today* #29)

Therefore, secular music (popular love songs) is not appropriate for use during the wedding liturgy. Secular music is best sung at the wedding reception, the rehearsal dinner or other wedding and engagement festivities.

Special Rites and Customs

Certain cultural traditions may celebrate additional rituals in the wedding liturgy (Native American, Filipino, Eastern European, Vietnamese, Hispanic, etc.) Music may or may not accompany these rites. For particular insight in Hispanic wedding rituals, read the booklet, Gift and Promise: Customs and Traditions in Hispanic Rites of Marriage, Don y Promesa: Costumbres y Tradiciones en los Rito Matrimoniales Hispanos, written by the Instituto de Liturgica Hispana and published by Oregon Catholic Press (OCP, 1-800-548-8749). For particular questions cultural rites and customs, call the Office of Worship at 831-8194.