

Saint Francis of Assisi Catholic Church Celebration of Holy Matrimony Information and Guidelines

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Dear Bride and Groom,

Congratulations on your intention to enter into the Sacrament of Matrimony!

May God bless you both on your journey toward a closer relationship with Him and His Church!

If you plan to have your wedding celebrated at St Francis, please note that **before** a firm date can be set, preparation takes approximately 12 months prior to the wedding date. This is explained in this document.

We will pray for you as you journey in the faith of Jesus Christ and His Church.

In His Mercy,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fr. Erin Kochivar'.

Fr. Erin Kochivar

Pastor, St. Francis of Assisi Parish

Congratulations on your engagement! Your upcoming marriage is very important. It is a special event for both of you, but also is very important to the greater Catholic church. Like you, the Catholic church wants your marriage to be the best it can be and thrive for your entire lifetime! We are here to help you, always.

The following information and guidelines are designed to assist you with preparing for your nuptial liturgy as well as for your marriage.

Who may marry?

Marriage in the Catholic Church is primarily between a Catholic man and a Catholic woman. However, the Church does allow for marriages between a Catholic and a baptized Christian of another denomination as well as between a Catholic and a non-baptized person.

According to the Code of Canon Law #102 & 107, all those who live within the boundaries established by the Bishop of the Diocese of Colorado Springs for St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church are in fact members of the parish.

Additionally, those living outside of the parish's boundaries who choose to associate themselves with St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church and have submitted a parish registration form are also considered to be members of our parish.

What is asked of you in preparing for marriage?

In the Diocese of Colorado Springs, certain requirements have been established by the bishop in order that you may be married in the Catholic church. These requirements are based on national norms for Catholic marriages. They are meant to ensure that you both are introduced to the biblical,

doctrinal, and pastoral instructions regarding the sacrament of Matrimony and the living of married life. We expect all couples to continue to partake of the precepts of the church including attending Mass on all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.

Establishing your wedding date

We know your big concern is: will this be done by my wedding date?

The process described below normally takes place over a duration of approximately **10 months** prior to your wedding day, but in some instances can be shortened to about 6 months depending on a lot of circumstances.

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church cannot and will not confirm any wedding dates until freedom to marry has been established. This includes the declaration of nullity of any previous marriage and the finalization of that process, the four freedom to marry forms (2 each), and validation of any impediments for marriage.

Therefore, please do not finalize your own date, but do let us know what your desires are. We will do everything we can to help you. You can help yourselves by being diligent about getting your requirements accomplished.

The Wedding Preparation Process

The Diocesan marriage preparation guidelines and process are broken down in this packet in three stages. The deacon or priest will maintain your paperwork until your wedding day and all information will be kept secure and confidential at our parish under lock and key.

First stage: The initial step is to meet with the priest or one of our deacons to assess whether the requirements of both canon and civil law regarding marriage are fulfilled, establishing the beginnings of *freedom to marry*. The priest or deacon will also outline this preparation process in which you will then participate.

If you are cohabitating, the priest or deacon will have a discussion with you about the sexual encounter. Expect to be asked to live a chaste life in preparation for the reception of the sacrament of Matrimony.

During this first stage, identify needs, and assign what is required to be done. This normally takes 1 meeting but is not completed until all information is obtained. That can take up to 6 months at times depending on others.

1. Initial Interview
2. Understanding the process
3. Completion of all forms, including dispensations and permissions.
4. Obtaining baptism certificates

Second stage: We ask all these items be accomplished. It is the norm throughout the United States. These requirements normally take from 5-12 months to get done, but it can go faster as courses and your schedule and diligence allows.

1. Diocesan authorized Marriage preparation course. Either online or in person classes.
 - -**In Person classes** with the parish. These are normally done by one of the deacons and can be modified to fit your needs. These 1 to 2

hour classes will be tailored for you.

- - **In person programmed Class:** by contacting Deacon Andy Berry aberry@diocs.org
 - -**Online classes:** At your own pace, one-on one with a mentor couple, please register directly at: www.CatholicMarriagePrep.com (\$275 per couple)
 - Cell: (719) 531-0738
2. Natural Family Planning (NFP) sessions. You may choose one of these or ask if another option is valid.
- Creighton Method Colorado Springs
 - **Rachel Langley, DO, NFPMC**
Cabrini Healthcare, Creighton Medical Consultant
Trained to interpret NFP charts for medical implications and treatment of couples
Phone: (719) 653-7838
Email: doc@homesteadcodpc.com
 - **Kris Hardesty**, in person, Kris@FertilityCareCS.com
(719) 602-6870
<https://fertilitycarecs.com>
\$320 to \$350 (\$80 intro class, \$60 each class, normally 4).
 - Marquette Model Colorado Springs
 - **Katie Creviston, RN**
Contact: www.vitaefertility.com/katie
 - **Heather Addison, RN, BSN** (Longmont)
Email: HeatherAddison@MarquetteNFP.com
 - Sympto-Thermal Method
 - Learnnfp.org/find-live-onsite-class (search for Colorado Springs).
jltrechter@fertilityyu.com, **Joe & Lori Trechter @ St Patrick**. \$170 couple – 3 classes.
 - ONLINE:
 - CCL (Couple to Couple League)
 - Register **online:** www.ccli.org, \$175.00 – \$230.00.

3. Inventory process

-In person

- FOCCUS
- Accomplished in person with trained volunteer facilitators here at St Francis. \$20.

-On Line:

- PREPARE-ENRICH
www.CatholicMarriagePrep.com
- Choose the "Courses" dropdown. Then select Premarital inventory. \$45 to \$110.

4. Catholic Engaged Encounter Retreat (optional but **strongly** encouraged)

- www.coscee.org, coloradocee@gmail.com. 40 couples, at Ponderosa Retreat Center, larkspur, CO and must register at least 14 days prior. Sat AM to Sun PM.
- Any Parish Based Retreat you can find is possible

Third stage: Normally, approximately two months before your wedding day, you will meet with a priest or deacon and the parish Music Director to prepare your nuptial liturgy. Our wedding coordinators will get in touch with you as well.

You are also responsible for getting all required paperwork completed and submitted **two months** before the approved wedding date. This is because the diocese requires a review of all information before your wedding date. We want to make sure they have some wiggle room if there are any issues, so it does not affect your wedding day.

Lastly, at the one month point before your wedding, you will conclude your preparation sessions by meeting with the priest or deacon celebrating your nuptial liturgy to ensure that everything is in place for you to be married in the Catholic Church.

What days and times are available for weddings?

Weddings may be celebrated on any day of the week but normally not Sunday. Please coordinate as soon as possible to help with deconfliction of

events. We do ask for any event in the Church to be completed 30 minutes before the next event in order to reset the Church for any function. Church Events that use the sanctuary: Morning Mass, Mon – Friday 8:30 AM. Adoration, Friday 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM, Thursday evening 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Weekend Mass, 5:00 PM Saturday, 8:30 AM, 10:30 AM and 5:00 PM Sunday. Confession Saturday 4:00 PM to 4:30 PM. Daily before morning Mass. Additionally, any marriage on a Saturday is asked to be after noon, normally 2:00 PM.

In accord with liturgical norms, there are certain days during the liturgical year when weddings are not celebrated. You may not marry during the Easter triduum. Weddings scheduled during Lent or Advent should consider the fact that the whole Church is observing a special period of penance and are less celebratory but are not prohibited.

A rehearsal date is assigned as soon as the wedding date is confirmed on the Church calendar.

Wedding - with a Mass or without?

It is generally presumed that all weddings celebrated between two Catholics will take place within the context of a Nuptial Mass, unless it is requested by you and decided by the priest to do otherwise.

When either the groom or bride is not Catholic, the Sacrament of Matrimony is normally celebrated without a Mass, but it is possible to have a Mass, this may be decided by the priest.

Weddings uniting a Catholic spouse and a non-baptized, non-Christian spouse will always be celebrated without Mass.

It is also possible to celebrate your wedding in a non-solemn way. A non-solemn wedding means only the bride, groom, two witnesses, immediate family and celebrant will be present, and the ceremony will take place without music.

There is a kneeler for the bride and groom available and its use is suggested.

The planning of the nuptial liturgy

Every nuptial liturgy celebrated by the priest or deacon ensures that the liturgy is celebrated in a respectful manner and in accordance with the liturgical norms of the Church. The priest or deacon and wedding hospitality will direct the wedding rehearsal.

Readings: The readings chosen for the nuptial liturgy must be from the Sacred Scriptures. The options are found at:

<https://www.foryourmarriage.org/readings/>

One reading from each category is required: Old Testament, Psalms, New Testament, and Gospel. Weddings that occur Saturday evening, Sunday or Holy Days require the daily readings. Additionally a book holding these readings will be provided to you.

Music: In choosing music, please remember the sacred nature of the liturgy. Purely secular music is not permitted in this sacred setting, nor prior to its beginning nor after its conclusion. Recorded music is never permitted at the nuptial liturgy. All music choices must be approved by the Music Director and the wedding page on the parish site (www.stfrancis.org) has music information. Specific music that means a lot to you or your parents may always be played at the reception. Please remember that Mass and the wedding sacrament are sacred events.

Musicians/Vocalists: Our St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church is blessed with well-trained professional and amateur musicians and vocalists who can be available for the nuptial liturgy. The Music Director can provide more information on available resources. The Music Director assists you with choosing the music for the nuptial liturgy.

Attire: The attire of the bridal party must reflect the dignity and solemnity of the occasion and reflect the Church's teaching regarding the ***virtue of modesty***. Some attire which is acceptable in contemporary fashion may not be appropriate

within the context of the liturgical celebration of marriage. The bride and groom should sincerely and prayerfully reflect on what is suitable dress for their wedding day.

Flowers: Grooms and brides should keep in mind that flowers should complement the solemnity of the occasion and not overwhelm it.

Flowers may be delivered by the florist prior to the start of the ceremony on the day of the ceremony as much as possible.

If you desire flowers in the altar area, two bouquets for either side is all that is appropriate.

Events outside the marriage rite: Unity candles or mixing of sand ***are not permitted*** at the nuptial ceremony according to the norms of the Church. If you would like to have these, they can be accomplished at your reception.

Lazo (Lasso): Lazo however, is permitted as it is an optional part of the Catholic marriage rite.

Aisle Runners and Pew: A carpet runner is not permitted at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church. Pew bows or decorations can be provided but if you want your own, they may be used provided they do not damage the pew and are removed immediately after the ceremony.

Behavior: Please ensure your guests and everyone behaves in a respectful and solemn manner during the entire ceremony. Your wedding is a beautiful but very solemn event. Please know that the Church has no restrictions on your reception. The following behaviors are examples of what should never happen, but it is in no way all inclusive.

1. No impromptu or planned dancing up or down the aisle
2. No inappropriate gestures like a high five
3. No consumption of alcohol: Please note that alcohol is not permitted on the property of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church. Furthermore,

*the drinking of alcohol by either the groom or bride before the ceremony **would result in the invalidity of the marriage** and as such the nuptial liturgy will not be able to proceed.*

Rice, birdseed, popcorn, potpourri, bubbles, etc.:

The throwing of rice and/or birdseed or of any other item and the blowing of bubbles are not permitted inside and only bubbles outside of the church or in the parking lot. The release of balloons is also not permitted. It is the responsibility of the groom and bride to inform their guests of these restrictions.

Wedding Hospitality: The wedding hospitality coordinators should contact you approximately 4 – 6 weeks prior to your wedding. They will help with all your details. If they don't contact you, please reach out to them.

Problems will arise: If something unexpected comes up, and things always do, please inform as many people as possible as soon as possible. Honestly, few weddings have ever gone 100% completely as planned. We have all dealt with many issues before and we will help!

Day of but prior to the Wedding: St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church has facilities for the bride/bridesmaids and groom/groomsmen to dress before the wedding if needed, please ensure we are aware of this need before the rehearsal. The bride and bridesmaids and the groom and groomsmen wait in separate areas assigned.

If you have a friend who is helping with hair, makeup, nails, etc., please practice beforehand. Avoid that awkward moment just before Mass.

Be aware of traffic or possible problems and plan accordingly.

Photography and Videography

It is important for the groom and bride to record their nuptial liturgy for the sake of memories. Yet it is just as important that the ceremony itself be free of distractions and annoyances which might occur when a photographer or videographer wants to take "that perfect shot" or as many shots as possible.

Grooms and brides are asked to inform their photographers and/or videographers of the following requests which the parish makes of them:

- The taking of bridal party or couple photographs should cease 30 minutes after the nuptial liturgy. Be ready, fully dressed in all accompaniments, no matter what is going on, 20 minutes prior to the wedding. Please.
- No flash, strobe, or floodlights are allowed during the liturgy.
- Photographers and videographers are not permitted to interfere with the nuptial liturgy in any way. They should not stand in the aisle during the entrance or recessional processions. They are asked to limit their movement as much as possible. The sanctuary area of the church should only be approached from either of the far side aisles. In no case is the photographer or videographer permitted to cross in front of the congregation between the sanctuary and the first pews in the center of the church.
- Photographers and videographers are not permitted in the sanctuary (altar area on the steps) during the ceremony.

Please introduce your photographer/ videographer to the Celebrant prior to the ceremony.

Franciscan Retreat Center

The Franciscan Retreat Center here on Mount St. Francis has 7 different sized conference/meeting

rooms (capacity 10—125), for wedding receptions & rehearsal dinners for weddings taking place here at St. Francis. They also offer good rates on lodging. Parish referrals get a 30% discount. With this discount, you can get a room that holds up to 40 people for as low as \$65.

The Retreat center is run by our diocese. To inquire about rates & availability, call 719-955-7025, or email FRC@diocs.org, or visit their website at <https://www.franciscanretreatcenter.org/> for details.

Are there any stipends or fees for the nuptial liturgy?

There is never a charge for sacraments as per Canon Law. It is appropriate, however, for the bride and groom to share their joy and, in generosity, to contribute to the support of the Church and its ministers. These stipends come in four categories, typically: *Donation to the Church, Musician/vocalist and others' fees, Altar Servers stipend, preparation stipend* and *Celebrant's stipend*.

Fee for non-parishioners to the Church. We charge a fee for non-parishioners. This is a nonrefundable \$500 fee for use of the church. We unfortunately had to go down this path because of previous issues. The pastor has authority to waive this requested donation.

Musician/vocalist and others' fees: All fees for cantors, vocalists, instrumentalists, florists, photographers, videographers, and internet streamers **must be negotiated with them and paid to them directly.**

Altar Servers: The parish may provide altar servers for the nuptial liturgy. If they are used, know they are normally young people giving up their time. We suggest a **minimum stipend of \$10.00**

(recommend \$20) is given to each server, normally two altar servers are used for a Nuptial Mass. This is not guaranteed, as their schedules may not allow it so stating this desire early would be helpful.

Celebrant's stipend: The services of the priest or deacon are free, but it is customary to offer a stipend to each priest or deacon celebrant. Father Erin will not accept any stipends for weddings, but other priests usually do. No specific amount is suggested but consider not only the time devoted to the rehearsal and wedding, but also the effort put into the marriage preparation process.

Preparation work: The deacon or person who helps you through this process is a volunteer and not paid. Time is taken out of their personal schedule and family time. Please be considerate for the time put in for your help and guidance.

Thank you cards. Please be aware that everyone who is involved in your ceremony is a volunteer. Be appreciative of them and thank you cards are highly encouraged. Including the office staff. A written thank you is often more meaningful than a verbal thank you as you leave.

Stipend/fee Summary (Approximate):

Church fee:

\$500 for non-parishioners

NFP fee \$175 to \$330 (depending on program)

FOCCUS fee \$20

Instrumentalist/vocalists/internet stream: (varies with the professionals and their fees)

Celebrant(s) stipend: (free will offering, your choice recommended amount \$100 to \$200) Note: Father Erin does not accept stipends. However other priests and deacons may.

Preparation work: Take into account the number of meetings but normally \$100 to \$500 depending on the work involved.

Altar Servers stipend: \$10 each (if used)

Again, congratulations!

We are committed to helping you make your wedding day a memorable one and your marriage a sacred and fulfilling life-long thriving union.

“Until death do us part.”

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church Contacts

St. Francis of Assisi Parish Office

parish@stfranciscs.org 719-599-5031 x100

Fr. Erin Kochivar, Pastor

ekochivar@stfranciscs.org (719) 599-5031 x101

Deacon Andy Berry, Marriage Preparation

aberry@diocs.org (719) 235-7724 cell

Ms. Jennifer Lehrman, Faith Formation Director, RCIA

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Mr. Mark Bauman, Music Director

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Mrs. Ginny Schene, Wedding Hospitality

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