



## WEDDING GUIDELINES

November 2017

The following guidelines are designed to help couples who are planning to be married at St. Francis de Sales Church. They are intended to assist in creating a very joyful and memorable celebration of Christian love and community for all!

1. Engaged couples must contact a parish priest at least one year before the date of their wedding. This is in conformity with the common policy guidelines in our diocese. A wedding can only be scheduled after the couple meets with the priest. At that meeting, the priest will discuss plans and eligibility requirements for the Sacrament of Marriage.

Couples are asked not to enter into any other commitment, such as a contract with a reception hall, photographer, etc., before confirming a wedding date and time in the parish.

2. Weddings are celebrated at St. Francis de Sales Church on Saturdays throughout the year and occasionally on Friday afternoons or evenings. However, weddings during the liturgical seasons of Lent and Advent are discouraged.

The schedule of time choices are as follows: For a Saturday wedding from 11:00 AM until 2:30 PM. For a Friday wedding, the time frame would be between 4:00 PM and 7:00 PM.

Weddings **must begin** at the scheduled times. There is a \$300.00 refundable deposit due at the first official meeting with Father. This is essential because weddings may be scheduled prior to or after your wedding, and appropriate preparations have to be made insure each wedding begins on time.

3. According to the requirements of the Diocese of Paterson, engaged couples must:
  - a. Complete an inventory for marriage preparation, i.e. *FOCCUS*. This is a self-diagnostic inventory designed to help couples learn more about themselves and their unique relationship.
  - b. Attend both a Pre-Cana Marriage Preparation Program and the program designed by the Diocese called *God's Plan For a Joy-Filled Marriage*. It is required that the couple provides a certificate indicating completion of either of those programs prior to the wedding.
4. Upon setting the church wedding date, couples must make an appointment with the priest. At that meeting he will further explain the necessary documents and requirements in order to be eligible to contract a marriage in the Catholic Church.

The following documents and testimony are required by Ecclesiastical Law:

- a. CERTIFICATE OF BAPTISM (if Baptized), issued by the church in which the Baptism was performed. This must be a newly issued certificate dated within 6 months of the wedding.
  - b. RECORD OF FIRST COMMUNION (if Catholic)
  - c. RECORD OF CONFIRMATION (if Catholic)
  - d. If previously married, CATHOLIC DECREE OF NULLITY, OR DEATH CERTIFICATE
  - e. A letter of freedom to marry may be required of non-parishioners
5. Application for a Marriage License can be made in any municipality in the State of New Jersey, preferably in the municipality in which either the bride or groom resides. Weddings taking place in the State of New Jersey require a New Jersey Marriage License. If the couple resides out of state, they must apply for the Marriage License in the municipality in which the wedding will take place.

Application for a Marriage License can be made up to 3 months in advance of the wedding date. The license is not issued until the month of the wedding, and once issued, it is good for 30 days. *(Please note that a Marriage License must be in the possession of the municipality for 72 hours, or 3 working days prior to the date of the wedding. Simply put – don't file too late!)* For complete information on the application requirements, call the Town Clerk / Registrar at the appropriate municipal building.

**The Marriage License must be brought to the church at the time of the wedding rehearsal or the Wedding will not occur.**

**After your marriage is official, you should obtain a certified copy of your marriage license from the Town Clerk / Registrar in the town where the ceremony was performed (not where you received your marriage license).** This certified document (with the raised seal) is necessary for official proof of name changes with such agencies as the Department of Social Security and the Department of Motor Vehicles.

6. Arrangements need to be made with the priest for the wedding rehearsal. It would usually take place the evening before the wedding. (However, this may not always be possible because of the schedule of the priest). The customary length of the rehearsal is 45 minutes. **It is inappropriate and inconsiderate for members of the wedding party to be late for the wedding rehearsal as the priest may have additional obligations before or after the rehearsal.**

**The following persons should be present at the rehearsal:**

- a. Bride and Groom
- b. Bride's Parents (or other escorts of the bride)
- c. Groom's Parents
- d. Best Man & Maid \ Matron of Honor

- e. Bridesmaids
- f. Groomsmen/Ushers
- g. Ring Bearer and/or Flower Girl (5 years or older)
- h. Readers and any other persons taking part in the marriage liturgy

**THE FOLLOWING ARE TO BE BROUGHT TO THE REHEARSAL:**

- a. Marriage License
  - b. Church Offering/Donation
  - c. Musicians Fees
  - d. Wedding Liturgy Booklets (optional)
7. Flowers and plants are welcome for decorating the worship space (and the atrium if desired). Arrangements should be made with your florist. We suggest two floral arrangements for the floor in front of the candles. If you wish to decorate with bows and/or flowers for the ends of the pews, please inform the florist that the use of thin, white curling ribbon works well for tying the bows to the pews. The use of tape is not permissible because the glue from tape damages the pews.
- In decorating the church this way, it is suggested that you continue with the bows on every other pew, thereby decorating the entire center aisle, if possible. (If you choose to do this, it would require 14 bows.) Please do not put any decorations on the floor along the aisles of the church, as this can cause a tripping hazard for your guests.
- The use of a white runner is not allowed.
8. All arrangements for photography must be approved by the priest. (See enclosed Guidelines regarding photography.)
9. If you plan to have a ring bearer or flower girl, please be sure that the children chosen are mature enough to understand directions and carry them out. The suggested age is 5 years old or older.
10. To avoid any hazard to safety, the throwing of rice, confetti, birdseed, or similar substances is **not** allowed. Also, we cannot allow the dropping of flower petals inside the church atrium or aisle, as flower petals stain the carpeting.
11. It is totally **unacceptable for you or your guests to consume alcoholic beverages on church property before or after the wedding**. The appropriate time for drinking a toast to the bride and groom is at the wedding reception. Therefore, in making your wedding day arrangements, **please inform the limousine service of these Guidelines**.
12. Couples must contact the parish Music Coordinator 6 months before the date of the wedding. This is especially important to insure proper coordination of arrangements for music. The Music Coordinator will meet with you to discuss the appropriate choices and music selections for your Wedding. Typically, she will meet with couples after Sunday Masses.

13. It is presumed that, since you are being married at St. Francis de Sales Church, the music at the wedding will be provided by the parish music ministers. If, however, you desire to have music ministers from outside the parish, you must obtain permission and approval from the pastor at the time of the initial meeting. All music selected must be approved by the Music Coordinator and the priest. The selections must conform to the guidelines in "*Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*" (US Conference of Catholic Bishops). The enclosed Wedding Music Guidelines will also help you in your planning. See the list of fees for more information.
14. All fees are to be brought to the church the night of the rehearsal. A check may be payable to St. Francis de Sales Church. Any other financial concerns should be discussed with the priest.
15. Directions to St. Francis de Sales Church can be found at [www.stfrancisvernon.org](http://www.stfrancisvernon.org). Please note that the GPS address is: 614 McAfee Glenwood Road, Vernon, NJ 07462. That is DIFFERENT from the mailing address which can be found on the first page of these Guidelines.

Best wishes to you, and may God bless you as you prepare to take on the life of Christian married love.

Fr. Brian P. Quinn  
Pastor