



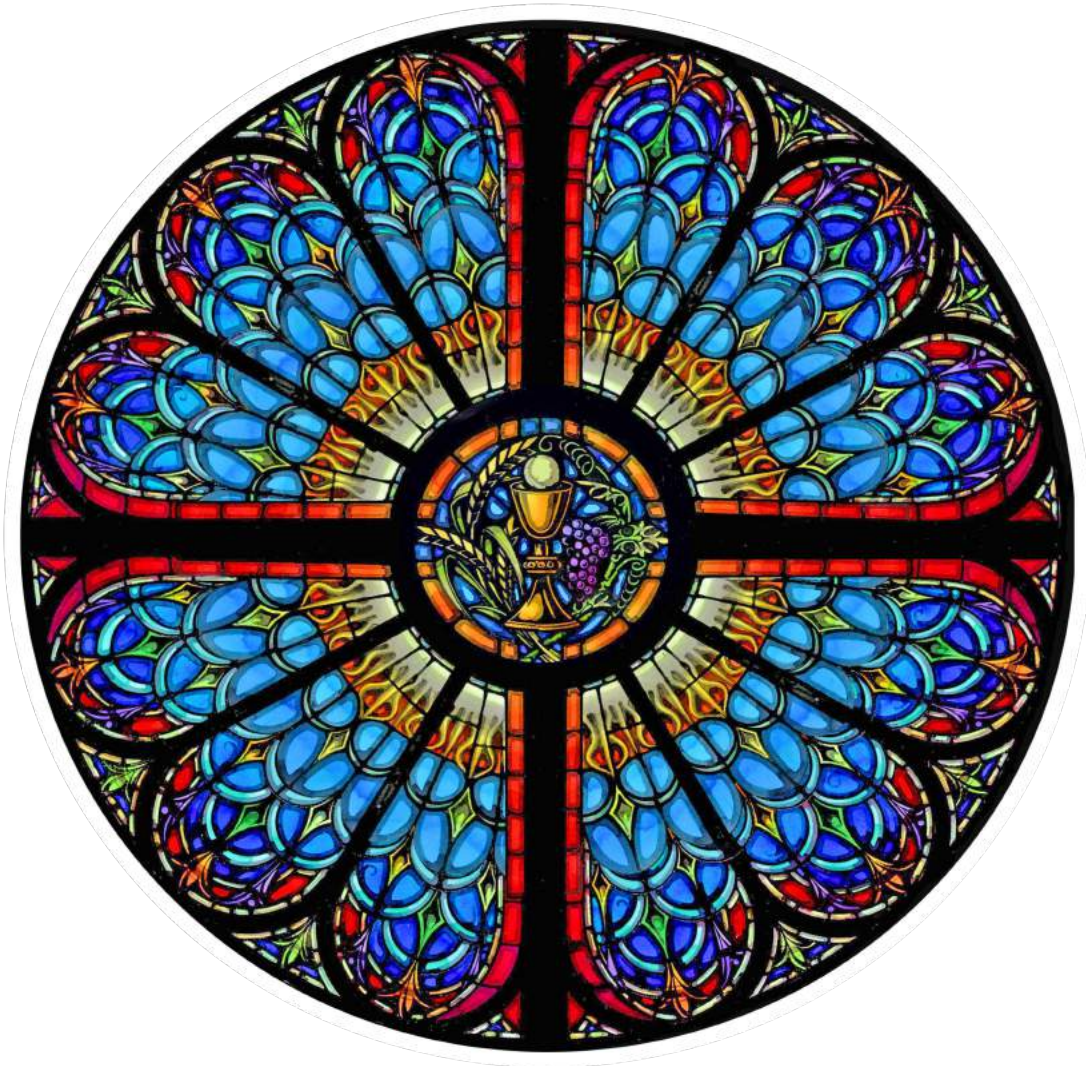
St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church

2 Xavier Circle, Birmingham, AL 35213

Phone: 205-871-1153 Fax: 205-871-9831

One in Christ

Celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage



Useful and important information for planning your
wedding at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church

*The Diocese of Birmingham requires that you contact the parish six months in advance prior to setting a date for your wedding.
It is also essential that you speak with the parish priest before setting a date for your wedding or making arrangements.*

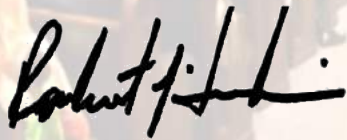
St. Francis Xavier

CATHOLIC CHURCH
P.O. Box 130669
Birmingham, Alabama 35213
205/871-1153/ FAX 871-9831

My Dear Friends in Christ:

In this booklet you will find the guidelines for celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Birmingham. These guidelines will assist you in planning your upcoming celebration. The guidelines should not be viewed as a series of restrictions; they are composed to help you celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage joyfully and reverently and are in place to help you plan the liturgy on this most important day. The guidelines will insure that your desire for a beautiful wedding is fulfilled.

May God be with you as you approach this great day and may He bless you now and always.



Reverend Robert J. Sullivan
Pastor

SCHEDULING YOUR WEDDING

The first step in scheduling your wedding is to make an appointment with one of the parish priests. Diocesan policy requires a six-month preparation period before the wedding can take place. (*Catholic Marriage Policy for the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama.*) The initial meeting with the priest involves getting to know each other and setting the dates.

No wedding will be placed on the calendar until this meeting takes place.

At this session the priest will discuss with the couple what matrimony means in the Church community. This meeting also deals with any of the questions regarding the “Freedom to Marry” in the Catholic Church. Parish policy will be more fully explained and you will be given a list of people to contact. Weddings will normally not be scheduled during the season of Lent. Catholic weddings are to be celebrated in the Church, and will not be celebrated on Sunday.

(*Catholic Marriage Policy for the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama.*)

1. If your marriage preparation will be done by a priest not at Saint Francis Xavier, then a letter must be written to the Pastor, explaining that the marriage preparation will be conducted and the completed Marriage File will be received by the pastor at least one month prior to the wedding date.. **Until this letter is received the date cannot be reserved on the calendar.**
2. If the Marriage preparation will take place outside of the Diocese of Birmingham, the same letter will be required, but the Marriage File must be sent through the local Chancery to the Birmingham Chancery.



AVAILABLE TIME AND DAY FOR YOUR WEDDING

Available times for wedding celebrations are:

Friday Wedding

7:00 pm

Saturday Wedding

11:00 am; 12:00 noon;

1:00 pm; 2:00 pm;

6:30 pm or 7:00 pm

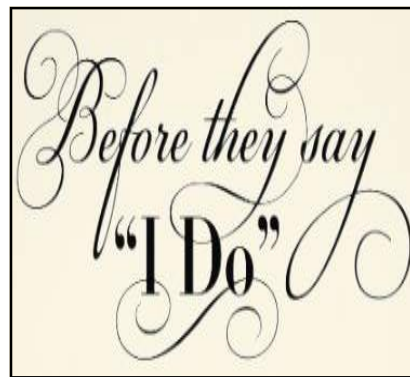
MARRIAGE PREPARATION

During the six-month period, the couple, with the help of the priest, completes the various requirements set by the Church:

1. The completion of the prenuptial inventory and the outline of the preparation in the coming months.
2. A discussion of any dispensations or permissions needed *(if applicable)*.
3. You will be encouraged to attend a Marriage Preparation Workshop. *(The priest encourages all couples to attend an Engaged Encounter Weekend. A schedule will be provided at the initial meeting with the priest.)*
4. You will be asked to complete a Couple Communication and Understanding Survey.
5. You will be given a book that allows you to plan the ceremony. The book entitled *Together for Life* by Joseph M. Champlan contains all the readings and prayers from which you may choose, and gives you a full outline of the ceremony. **There is a helpful form in the back of the book which should be completed and given to the church office (attn: Molly Knerl) one month before your wedding date.** Please read the accompanying guidelines regarding the use of the parish church.

PLANNING THE WEDDING CEREMONY

The celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage involves the couple to be married and their families, but also the priest, the music director and cantor, the wedding coordinator (s) and the church building itself. After your initial meeting with the priest, you will be put in contact with a wedding coordinator who will help you organize your wedding within the guidelines acceptable at St. Francis Xavier Parish. The wedding coordinator will also assist you in assigning altar servers for your wedding, if needed.



REHEARSAL

The wedding rehearsal sets the tone for the ceremony the next day.

Rehearsal Times: Generally, rehearsals will be scheduled between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. the evening before the wedding.

Rehearsal reminders:

- **Please bring the marriage license with you.**
- Please ask attendants, and all who have a specific role in the wedding, to arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled rehearsal. Only those people who have specific responsibilities in the wedding need to be present at the rehearsal. If you have additional guests invited to the dinner afterwards, please ask them to meet your party at the dinner. Music will be rehearsed at a separate time.

The priest makes no assumptions regarding invitations. If you wish for the priest to attend specific functions connected with the wedding, please make every effort to invite him early.

Environment

The Church is a sacred space. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in every Catholic Church, dedicating it to God's presence. Everything done for the wedding must both reflect and respect this reality.

Liturgical Furnishings

The placement of the liturgical furnishings is legislated by the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. The celebrant's chair, the ambo and lectern, the credence table and the cantor's stand, are to remain in their original position and may not be moved.

Unity Candle

Unity Candles are not a part of the Catholic wedding ceremony and will not be allowed at St. Francis Xavier Church.

Pew Markers

Nothing should be taped to the pews. No candles are allowed on the pew markers. *(If ribbon bows are to be used, they may be tied to the end of the pews.)*

Aisle Cloth

Aisle cloths create a tripping hazard and may not be used. Our insurance will not cover a claim for slipping on an aisle cloth or "runner".

Use of Bride's Room on Wedding Day

Saint Francis Xavier has a small Bridal Room that can be used as a dressing room for the bride and her attendants, but it is not a space suitable for hair or makeup preparations. This room will be available for use by the wedding party at 10am for afternoon weddings and 2pm for evening weddings. We ask that all articles brought into the Bridal Room be removed and placed in private cars before the ceremony begins, at which time this room will be closed and locked.

Flower Girls and Ring Bearers

Children must be six years of age or older to participate in the wedding. We do not allow loose flower petals anywhere in the Church or on the premises. The girls may have flowers in a basket. No petals are to be thrown. Loose flower petals cause a hazard on the floor.

Wedding Party Attire

With consideration of the fact that the Church is the House of God, appropriate attire should be worn by those in the wedding party. Please make every effort to ensure "low cut" or "short" dresses are not worn.



"Since marriage establishes the couple in a public state of life in the Church, it is fitting that its celebration be public, in the framework of a liturgical celebration, before the priest (or witness authorized by the Church), the witnesses, and the assembly of the faithful."

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993

Rice and Birdseed

We ask that nothing—rice, birdseed, confetti, glitter, or flower petals be thrown or scattered anywhere on the premises. Again, our insurance will not cover any claim submitted if used on our premises. Bubbles may be used, but only outside the building.

Food

Because the Church is dedicated for worship, it is inappropriate for food or drinks to be in the Church sanctuary. You may only have food or drink in the Bride's Room or the Joseph Room. Please take care to try and keep food off of the floor in those areas.

Alcoholic Beverages

No alcoholic beverages are to be consumed by members of the wedding party at any time prior to the wedding rehearsal or ceremony. Any member of the wedding party appearing to be inebriated will not be allowed to participate in the ceremony.

Church Wedding Coordinator

For each rehearsal and wedding, a coordinator from our parish will be present. Our coordinator will be available from the beginning of wedding planning to help with the Church details. She will also function as a coordinator during the rehearsal and wedding to guide you through the details. The Wedding Coordinator is assigned 6 months prior to your wedding and will meet with you soon after her assignment.

Flowers

At St. Francis Xavier, we have a Flower Guild that provides flower arrangements for all of our liturgies except weddings and funerals. Flowers are an integral part of our Church worship environment. Therefore, all weddings must provide flower or greenery arrangements for the sanctuary. These arrangements will remain in the sanctuary for all weekend liturgies. Two free-standing floral or green arrangements are to be placed in the sanctuary. You must use our flower stands. The wedding flowers placed in the sanctuary are for God's greater glory. The flowers must remain throughout the weekend. No artificial or silk flowers may be used for decorations anywhere in the Church. During the Easter Season (*Easter Sunday to Pentecost*) the "ring" at the base of the Paschal Candle must be decorated with flowers.

Important Note*

Flowers provided by the Church for the Christmas Season until the celebration of The Baptism of the Lord (trees and poinsettias) and arrangements provided at Easter (lilies) **MUST NOT BE REMOVED FROM THE SANCTUARY**. The wedding coordinator will be available to meet with the florist or answer questions on the phone in order to prevent misunderstandings regarding decorations.



PICTURES

Pictures and videos must always be in perspective to the central significance of the sacrament. We ask that you use one designated photographer and/or videographer. No photography or video equipment may be positioned in the sanctuary (the raised section in the front of the Church).

Pictures should end approximately 45 minutes prior to the ceremony. On Saturday, no pictures can be taken in the Church or in the vestibule between 3:30 pm and 5:45 pm

In keeping with the solemnity of the occasion, *no flash pictures* are to be made during the ceremony. Photographers customarily take pictures of the wedding party before the ceremony or during a period not to exceed **thirty minutes** immediately thereafter.

MUSIC

Music for weddings is under the direction of the music coordinator. Following contact with a priest, you are expected to set up an appointment with the music coordinator who will assist you in the selections of music ***four (4) months prior to your wedding***. Music is a key component of our sacramental celebrations. Wedding music must meet the standard defined by the wedding music directives of the Diocese of Birmingham. The music coordinator will assist in the selection of music in accordance with church policy. Please do not contact other musicians before meeting with the music coordinator. All visiting musicians and soloists must coordinate their activity through the music coordinator.

Cantors must come from the St. Francis Xavier Music Department and be scheduled through the Music Department. Guest soloists may sing, but must audition either in person or via tape or CD. They must come prepared; that is, they are responsible for learning their music before rehearsing with the accompanist.

As a policy of St. Francis Xavier Church, the responsorial psalm, gospel acclamation, and Eucharistic acclamations are always sung, never spoken.

Music plans must be finalized at least four (4) weeks before the scheduled date of the wedding & musician fees must be paid at the time.

Music Coordinator: Nancy Grundhoefer / 803-5415



Marriage Prayer

Lord, help us
to remember when
we first met
and the strong love
that grew between us.
To work that love
into practical things
so nothing can
divide us.
We ask for words
both kind & loving
and hearts always
ready to ask
forgiveness
as well as forgive.
Dear Lord
we put our
marriage into
your hands.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Maintenance & Utility Fees

Due 30 days after the initial meeting with the parish priest and the wedding date has been posted on the parish calendar. Contact the Parish Secretary.

***Church**

Registered Parishioner	\$150.00
Non-Parishioner	\$1,000.00

***Parish Hall**

Registered Parishioner	\$ 500.00 (1-8 hours)
	\$1,000.00 (over 8 hours)
Non-Parishioner	\$1,000.00 (1-8 hours)
	\$1,500.00 (over 8 hours)
Insurance	\$ 105.00
Security	\$ 200.00
Facilities Fee	\$ 75.00
Refundable Deposit	\$ 200.00

Cancellations: May be subject to \$100 fee.

**Please note that these fees go directly to the church and NOT to the priest witnessing the marriage.
It is customary that a stipend be given to the priest.*

Due One Month In Advance of Wedding Date

Liturgy / Ceremony Outline (Planning form from “Together for Life”)

Flower / Decoration Plans for the Church

Outstanding Fees (Wedding Coordinator, Music Coordinator)



Fees

Individual Fees: *(when applicable) Please make checks payable to the individual persons.*

Accompanist:	\$250.00 and up
Soloist / Cantor:	\$200.00
Music Coordinator (sound)	\$100.00

(Generally speaking, musicians will not be present at rehearsals. Other fees may be applicable.)

Wedding Coordinator:	\$200.00
Celebrant (Priest):	A stipend for the priest is customary

Altar Servers, Lectors, and Extraordinary Minister of Communion:	A small, monetary gift is customary
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We are happy you chose to celebrate your wedding at St. Francis Xavier Church. These guidelines will assist in making your wedding experience a holy and memorable event.

(Should any parishioner experience a financial hardship, please meet the pastor for other arrangements.)

FLOWER INFORMATION

The florist is to provide containers for use in the sanctuary and in the church vestibule (foyer). *The 38" disc on the vestibule table centerpiece must remain in place. If you are using a cloth, please place the acrylic on top of the cloth.* Nothing should be taped to the pews. No candles are allowed on the pew markers. (If only ribbon bows are to be used, they may be tied to the ends of the pews.)

St. Francis Xavier provides the following:

- Stands for the main altar (*paper-mache pots / size #7*)
- Commercial cooler for storage of pre-arranged bouquets, boutonniere, corsages, flower girl baskets.

The wedding coordinator will be available to meet with the florist or to answer questions on the phone in order to prevent misunderstandings regarding decorations.

Florists are to remove any storage boxes, pots, etc. from the church prior to the wedding. They may be taken to the dumpster on the property. Any special containers, vases, etc. used in the wedding not picked up from the church by the following Wednesday afternoon will be thrown away.

We invite you to use the cooler in the Flower Room the day of the wedding to store bouquets, boutonnieres, corsages, or flower girl baskets. However, flowers to be used in arrangements are not to be stored at the church un-arranged. Flowers for use in the wedding may be stored in the coolers only 24 hours prior to the wedding.

If arrangements are not pre-arranged prior to being brought into the church, containers for the sanctuary and vestibule arrangements are to be prepared prior to being brought into the church. If flowers are to be inserted into the containers at the church, they should be arranged with the containers in place and not in the flower room.

All containers are to be pre-prepared with oases, wire, tape, etc. prior to bringing containers to church. Please make sure that the containers do not leak or drip.

St. Francis Xavier cannot be responsible for any flowers or materials left at the church the day prior to a wedding or 24 hours after a wedding.

Flowers must be in place four (4) hours before an evening wedding and three (3) hours before an afternoon wedding.

Outside Decorations

Two floral arrangements/bows/wreaths are allowed to be hung on the outside columns. (*Nails are in place in the columns to accommodate your decorations.*) Please do not hang anything on the doors of the church.



IMPORTANT NOTE:

Flowers are an integral part of our church worship environment. Therefore, ***all*** weddings must provide fresh flower or greenery arrangements for the sanctuary. These arrangements must remain in the sanctuary for all weekend liturgies. No artificial or silk flowers may be used for decorations anywhere in the church.

During the Easter Season (*Easter Sunday to Pentecost*) the “ring” at the base of the Paschal Candle must be decorated with flowers.

Flowers provided by the Church for the Christmas Season until the celebration of The Baptism of the Lord (trees and poinsettias) and arrangements provided at Easter (lilies) **MUST NOT BE REMOVED FROM THE SANCTUARY**. The wedding coordinator will be available to meet with the florist or answer questions on the phone in order to prevent misunderstandings regarding decorations.

PHOTOGRAPHER INFORMATION

Pictures and videos must always be in perspective to the central significance of the sacrament. We ask that you use one designated photographer and/or videographer. No photography or video equipment may be positioned in the sanctuary (the raised section in the front of the Church).

Pictures should end approximately 45 minutes prior to the ceremony. On Saturday, no pictures can be taken in the Church or in the vestibule between 3:30 pm and 5:45 pm

In keeping with the solemnity of the occasion, *no flash pictures* are to be made during the ceremony. Photographers customarily take pictures of the wedding party before the ceremony or during a period not to exceed **thirty minutes** immediately thereafter.

Wedding Checklist

To schedule wedding:

- ☐ Meet with priest (at least 6 months prior to wedding taking place).
- ☐ Pay church fees. Make payable to Saint Francis Xavier.

Four months prior to wedding:

- ☐ Meet with Nancy Grundhoefer (Music Director) to plan wedding music.
- ☐ Start planning wedding, using the ***Together for Life*** booklet and form located in the back of the booklet. When this form is completed, please mail it or turn it to the church office (attn: Molly Knerl, Liturgist).

One month prior to wedding:

All music plans finalized.

- ☐ All fees paid.
- ☐ Musicians *Please make checks payable to the individual persons.*
Accompanist \$250 Soloist/Cantor \$200 Music Coordinator \$100
Wedding Coordinator (\$200). *Please make checks payable to the individual persons.*
- ☐ ***Together for Life*** form due. Please mail it or turn it into the church office attn: Molly Knerl.
- ☐ Plan stipends for Altar Servers (if applicable) and priest officiating wedding.

Parish Hall Rental (If Applicable):

- ☐ Confirm availability with church.
- ☐ Complete rental forms with parish secretary (secretary@sfxbirmingham.com).
- ☐ Payment of Parish Hall rental fees and damage deposit due at time of booking.
- ☐ Payment of Security Guard fees (\$200) due one month prior to wedding. *Please make checks payable to the individual persons.*