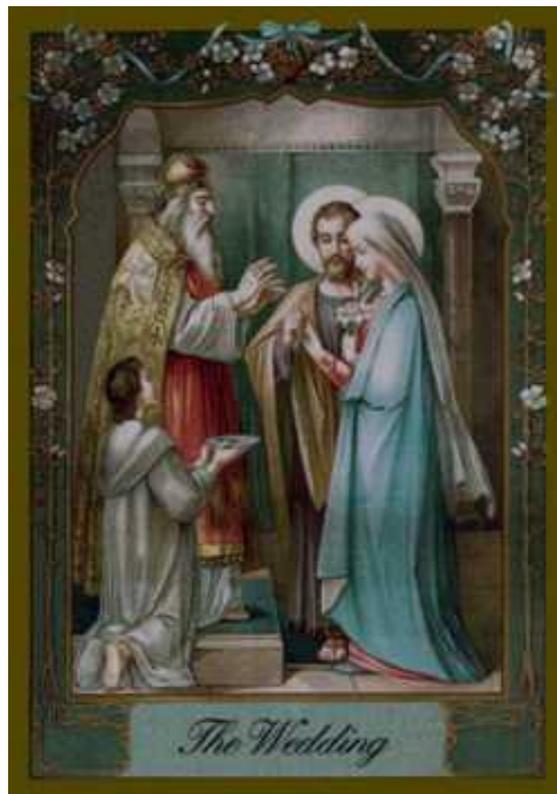


PLANNING YOUR WEDDING



# SAINT MARY OF THE ANNUNCIATION

*THE FIRST CATHOLIC PARISH IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES*



SAINT MARY OF THE ANNUNCIATION

OFFICES: 89 HASSELL STREET

CHURCH: 93 HASSELL STREET

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29401

843.722.7696

SMA.CHURCH

Pastor	The Reverend H. Gregory West, JCL	
Parochial Vicar	The Reverend Patrick S. Allen	
Deacon	Dr. Paul Rosenblum	
Parish Secretary	Becky Achterhoff	843.722.7696
Choirmaster & Organist	Larry Long	843.813.3631
Wedding Coordinator	Rosie Ryan	



Dear Friends,

The clergy, staff, and parishioners of Saint Mary of the Annunciation rejoice with you in your engagement to each other. We look forward to walking with you as you approach one of the most important days in your life, the beginning of the sacred covenant of Christian marriage.

In asking to be married in the Catholic Church, you are publicly proclaiming your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. For two baptized persons of all Christian traditions, this union becomes the Sacrament of Matrimony, a tangible sign of Christ's love and life in our midst. The sacred liturgy of your wedding, which begins your married life by your solemn exchange of marital consent, is first and foremost an act of worship. We will help you prepare both for your wedding day and for the lifetime of marriage that follows your nuptial liturgy.

We appreciate your desire to have every detail of your wedding carefully planned and gracefully executed. We will work with you to ensure that the sacred liturgy is a beautiful and memorable event for you, your families, and friends. **We ask you to remember that your wedding, although an intensely personal moment for you, is not a *private* event; rather, it is a liturgy, an act of worship by the Church. For this reason, we must take care to ensure that the sacred liturgy is celebrated according to the practice of the Church and in conformity with liturgical law and local custom.** You may rely on our decades of experience in guiding and assisting you with how weddings are celebrated first and foremost as **worship**.

May God bless your joy and happiness in this time of anticipation and preparation!

# WEDDINGS AT SAINT MARY OF THE ANNUNCIATION

*PLEASE READ THIS DOCUMENT ENTIRELY BEFORE CONTACTING US. THANK YOU.*

## RESERVING THE CHURCH

**D**estination weddings are very popular in Charleston.

Our church, however, is not a destination wedding venue. Rather, this is our spiritual home, a sacred place where many generations of Charlestonians have lived their lives, beginning with baptism and ending with a funeral. For that reason, the life and needs of our parish come first.

Our church is a favorite place for celebrating Holy Matrimony. We are pleased to share it. Unfortunately, limitations of time, resources, and personnel prevent us from honoring the requests of every couple.

Because of the volume of requests, we employ an application system and appreciate your participation. Here is how an engaged couple may apply for a reservation:

### **For Members of the Parish:**

1. Complete and mail the WEDDING AGREEMENT (FORM A in the appendix) and CHECK FOR \$1,000 payable to Saint Mary of the Annunciation to the parish offices.
2. When the office has verified parishioner status, the Pastor or his designee will contact the couple for the INTAKE INTERVIEW.
3. During this interview, the wedding date and time are discussed and, hopefully, confirmed with the couple. The Pastor or his designee will then complete FORMS B & D with the Catholic party/parties.
4. Do not book wedding services (e.g. reception venue) until your wedding date is confirmed by the Pastor.
5. Membership at Saint Mary of the Annunciation is determined by the following criteria:  
Either the bride or the groom must be (a) a visible and practicing Catholic on Sundays and holy days of obligation, (b) registered in the parish office

*no less than one year before applying to schedule a wedding date, and (c) having an ongoing record of financial support of the parish through use of the envelope or online giving system. This is all proof of your commitment to Christ and to your parish community.*

6. Adult children of active parishioners who live elsewhere may qualify for the parishioner rate. They must be registered and active in their respective Catholic parish.

### **For Visitors:**

1. Complete and mail the WEDDING AGREEMENT (FORM A in the appendix) and CHECK FOR \$3,250 payable to Saint Mary of the Annunciation to the parish offices.
2. Include the MARRIAGE PREPARATION AGREEMENT (FORM B in the appendix) from the pastor of the Catholic parish where the couple will prepare for Holy Matrimony, stating that his parish will be responsible for all pastoral and canonical preparation and documentation, and that the parish will forward the records to Saint Mary of the Annunciation no less than three months prior to the wedding date.
3. Include OFFICIANT AGREEMENT (FORM C in the appendix) from the Catholic priest or deacon who will preside at your wedding liturgy, stating that he agrees to all practices and policies for the celebration of weddings here.
4. Include PASTOR'S PERMISSION TO MARRY (FORM D in the appendix) signed by the Catholic pastor(s) of the Catholic party/parties.
5. Once the WEDDING AGREEMENT, CHECK, MARRIAGE PREPARATION AGREEMENT, OFFICIANT AGREEMENT, and PASTOR'S PERMISSION TO MARRY are received in our offices and approved by our Pastor, your requested wedding date and time will be considered. We will notify you in writing if they have been approved.
6. **You must mail all items listed in #4 above to the parish office together.** If not received together, we will return the items to you and your reservation request will be delayed.

**There are no tentative reservations.** We cannot "pencil you in." We can tell you what dates and times are open but our doing so does not mean you can count on your request. We confirm requested dates and times IN WRITING only after the above steps have been taken.

**If one or both parties has been married previously, and the previous spouse(s) is/are still living,** a Decree of Nullity (annulment) must be issued by the appropriate diocesan Tribunal before an application will be considered. There are no exceptions to this. If a previous marriage received a Decree of Nullity, include a copy with your application.

**All arrangements are made between the parish staff and the bride and groom only.** We do not plan with mothers, fathers or others. Relatives, friends, and wedding consultants may assist with other areas pertaining to the wedding.

### **WHEN MAY WEDDINGS TAKE PLACE?**

Through January 31, 2019, weddings may be scheduled on open **Saturdays at 11:00 am, 2:00 pm or 5:00 pm.** **For weddings taking place on or after February 1, 2019,** weddings may be scheduled on **Saturdays at 12:00 pm or 3:00 pm only.**

Those days when weddings may not be celebrated are:

- Sundays and weekdays\*
- the season of Lent
- Holy Days of Obligation
- Easter weekend
- the weekend after Easter
- Spoleto Festival dates (end of May-beginning of June)
- Independence Day Holiday weekend
- All Souls Day (November 2)
- Thanksgiving weekend
- the season of Advent
- the weekend after Christmas
- New Year's Eve

We will not schedule weddings on these days. Other dates may be unavailable due to parish events.

\*In some rare and pressing circumstances, a weekday may be considered. The final decision rests with the Pastor.

## **WHAT MUST BE DONE BEFORE THE WEDDING?**

### **– PARTICIPATION IN PRE-MARRIAGE COUNSELING**

A wedding is a liturgy that lasts less than one hour; a marriage is a lifetime commitment of sacrificial love in a solemn and sacramental covenant. Wedding preparation and marriage preparation are two different things. Preparing for the marriage is by far the more important.

The Church requires all engaged couples to attend an approved pre-marriage preparation program, not simply because it is a “requirement” or a “hoop” to jump through, but because it is important for their life together. Our sole desire is that couples become married in Christ and stay married until they die. Everything the Church does and asks is towards this end. Pastoral experience proves that pre-marriage preparation in the Church leads to stronger relational and marital bonds.

At a minimum and by mandate of our bishop, pre-marriage preparation must begin no less than six months prior to the intended wedding date.

For parishioners of Saint Mary of the Annunciation, information will be given about our parish preparation program. Couples who live out of town/non-parishioners should plan for approved pre-marriage counseling in their local parish. A certificate of completion of marriage preparation is to be provided to our parish offices.

## **WHO PLANS THE WEDDING LITURGY?**

By asking to have your wedding in this Catholic parish, you are choosing a Catholic wedding. The Church is not a passive participant or an unconcerned party to this event. This is not merely a civil ceremony or a social event in an auditorium. Weddings, like all liturgies, are public, liturgical actions of the Church, and the celebration of weddings is governed by liturgical law to ensure its beauty, sanctity, and validity. Love for the Church and her sacred liturgy is the chief reason Catholics desire a Catholic wedding. The basic form of the wedding liturgy, then, is given by the Church, and no variation from that form is possible. We cannot accommodate non-Catholic weddings.

Within that basic form, the bride and groom may select the first and second readings and the Gospel from the set of readings given by the Church, readings

which come from Sacred Scripture. No other readings are permitted.

Though sometimes used in other places, the “Unity Candle” is not a part of the wedding liturgy or tradition of the Catholic Church, and its use is not permitted at Saint Mary of the Annunciation. If you wish to use the candle, please do so at your wedding reception.

In harmony with Catholic tradition, the bride may leave a flower/bouquet in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary, asking the intercession of Our Lady as did the couple at the wedding feast of Cana (see John 2:1-11).

Once your application has been approved, please contact Larry Long for an appointment to plan your wedding liturgy.

### **SHOULD THE WEDDING BE WITHIN OR OUTSIDE OF HOLY MASS?**

Perhaps a definition of terms may be helpful. Every Catholic Mass consists of a LITURGY OF THE WORD (Introductory Rites, Readings, the Homily, and General Intercessions) and the LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST (the bread and wine are offered and become Christ’s Body & Blood, distribution of Holy Communion). The Rite of Marriage in both cases takes place after the Homily. However, for a wedding outside of Mass, the liturgy immediately moves from the General Intercessions to the Nuptial Blessing, the Lord’s Prayer, and the final blessing (i.e., there is neither Consecration nor distribution of Holy Communion).

For weddings between two Catholics, the Nuptial Mass is the appropriate liturgy. However, if the Catholic couple is cohabiting before marriage, only the simpler Rite of Marriage will be celebrated.

For weddings between a Catholic and a non-Catholic, only the simpler Rite of Marriage will be celebrated. There are no exceptions to this.

For weddings within the context of Mass (the Nuptial Mass), the Catholic priest or deacon will distribute Holy Communion. Visiting extraordinary ministers are not used.

### **FOR COUPLES ALREADY LIVING TOGETHER (COHABITATION)**

Although many couples in our current society live together before marriage, it

remains an unacceptable practice for a Christian. In addition, studies have shown that couples who live together before marriage have much higher rates of divorce and a poorer quality of marital relationship than those who do not.

As a recent pastoral letter explains, the Church's teaching on cohabitation is not an "arbitrary" rule. Living together before marriage violates God's commandments. Saint Paul lists this sin – technically called "fornication" – among the sins that can keep a person from reaching heaven (see 1 Corinthians 6:9). Since you are freely choosing to be married in Christ, it is important to live the commandments He gives us. The Church does not exist merely to provide beautiful ceremonies, but to proclaim *through her members* the full, life-giving Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Your engagement is meant to be a time of grace and growth in preparing for your marriage. Therefore, couples who are living together are expected to separate and remain chaste before contacting the office to request a wedding.

Living chastely during your remaining months of engagement will produce many spiritual fruits, helping both of you to grow in the virtues of generous love, sacrificial giving, self-restraint, and good communication. These virtues are essential for a good, lasting marriage.

The Church is here to help you to correct your living situation. If a cohabiting couple chooses not to separate, a wedding may be scheduled at the Pastor's discretion, but it will be a private ceremony of the couple with two witnesses, and immediate family only. To do otherwise suggests to the world that the Catholic Church condones cohabitation.

*(Many points taken from Living Together, by the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, 1999.)*

## **CANDLES, LITURGICAL FURNISHINGS, ETC.**

The furnishings for the sacred liturgy are provided by the parish. This includes all vestments, books, candles and candlesticks, kneelers, chairs, and other elements as needed. We cannot use family heirlooms in the celebration of the sacred liturgy. Our church's furnishings are *fixed* and cannot be moved.

To aid your planning: Our church seats approximately 220 people downstairs. An additional 100 seats are available in the balcony. There is no elevator.

## **CLERGY – WHO WILL OFFICIATE AT YOUR WEDDING?**

The Pastor of Saint Mary of the Annunciation is responsible for every sacramental celebration that takes place in this parish. He and he alone may delegate this to other Catholic priests or deacons who hold the necessary canonical faculties.

If you are a member of another parish and are borrowing our facilities, you are to invite your own priest or deacon to officiate at your wedding. **The clergy of Saint Mary of the Annunciation are not available to officiate at weddings of non-parishioners.** A visiting presider must obtain the required delegation from our Pastor, providing proof from his diocesan chancery that he is a priest or deacon in good standing. Delegation will only be granted when all the required paperwork, permissions, and dispensations have been completed and sent to our parish offices. **This delegation cannot be sub-delegated.** The visiting presider must abide by our wedding policies and only celebrate the liturgy according to the approved, Catholic form. Our parish's wedding coordinator represents our Pastor and is responsible for ensuring our parish policies are honored, including by visiting clergy. She has the final say at the rehearsal and the wedding.

If you desire to invite non-Catholic clergy to participate in the wedding liturgy, you must submit a written request to the Pastor of Saint Mary of the Annunciation, giving the name, title, and address of the clergy you want to invite. Non-Catholic clergy are permitted to participate in a Catholic non-Mass wedding by reading one of the Scripture readings (other than the Gospel) and perhaps offering a prayer. The Catholic priest or deacon must read the Gospel, preach the homily, receive the wedding vows, and impart the Nuptial Blessing. The ritual of the Roman Catholic Church is always used, and the form of the celebration will *always* be the wedding outside of Mass when non-Catholic clergy are present.

## **WHO PLANS THE MUSIC?**

All music at Saint Mary of the Annunciation is planned and coordinated with our Choirmaster and Organist in consultation with the bride and groom only. (Parents and friends do not accompany the couple.) The parish's Choirmaster & Organist serves as the organist for the wedding. Only sacred, approved music is permitted. The cantor for your wedding, which is not optional, is provided by our music department.

Additional instruments are available upon request. Only the best local musicians are hired, usually associated with, but not limited to, the Charleston Symphony Orchestra. Each of these musicians charges his or her own independent fee. One or two instrumentalists may be hired through the music department with no additional rehearsal or administrative charges.

The music department hires only those vocal and instrumental musicians who have been approved and demonstrate competency in the musical, acoustical, and liturgical complexities of our church. Guest instrumental or vocal musicians are not permitted.

All music and musician contracting is coordinated through our parish's music department. Private contracting or coordinating of music or musicians is not permitted, and such musicians will not be permitted to play or sing.

No music or accompaniment by recording or automation is permitted before, during, or after the wedding or rehearsal.

## **WHAT IS THE FEE FOR A WEDDING AT SAINT MARY OF THE ANNUNCIATION?**

For an **active, registered parishioner** who wishes to celebrate his/her wedding liturgy, we request a gift of \$1,000 to be paid in full at the time of the reservation request. This fee covers the costs of our wedding coordinator, organist, cantor/vocalist, stipend for the priest or deacon, formatting of the worship program and flowers for the altar. If the wedding is cancelled by the bride or groom, a refund of \$750 will be made. We send the formatted worship program to the couple who then takes it to a printer of their choice.

## **THE FEE FOR NON-PARISHIONERS**

For guests who wish to celebrate their wedding liturgy in our parish, effective March, 1, 2018, we request a gift of \$3,250 to be paid in full at the time of the reservation request. This fee covers the costs of our wedding coordinator, organist, cantor/vocalist, stipend for the priest or deacon, formatting of the worship program and flowers for the altar. We send the formatted worship program to the couple who then takes it to a printer of their choice. If the wedding is cancelled by the bride or groom, a refund of \$3,000 will be made.

## **WHY DO I HAVE TO OFFER FEES TO USE A CHURCH?**

Our contributing, hard-working parishioners fund the day-to-day operations of our parish. While ours is a beautiful church, it does not maintain itself. We are a very small parish, and our few families and their support make it possible for the parish to exist. Therefore, for visitors who would like to use the church, we ask a fee to help make up the cost of keeping our historic building maintained, air conditioned/heated, and open, as well as parish administrative costs. Compared to other expenses (the reception, dresses, tuxes, etc.), our fee is justified.

## **OUR WEDDING COORDINATOR**

Our highly experienced staff Wedding Coordinator provides many important, vital functions before, during, and after the wedding. She serves to help the bride and groom and is totally responsible for implementing the policies and customs of our parish. She will consult with the priest/deacon, conduct the rehearsal, give directions for the procession and placement of the wedding party, and ensure that the altar furnishings, candles, and lights are properly set.

Should you wish to use an outside professional wedding director or wedding planner, that person will have no responsibilities at Saint Mary of the Annunciation. Our staff Wedding Coordinator will be completely responsible. She represents the Pastor of our parish and is empowered to enforce our wedding policies completely, including with visiting clergy. She has the final say.

## **DO I NEED A WORSHIP AID?**

Yes. The worship aid (order of worship) is important for your guests to follow along with the sacred liturgy and to participate actively. The parish secretary will work with you to create a worship aid that is beautiful and appropriate for your wedding. Her fee includes the necessary file or hard-copy document to create your wedding worship aid. You are responsible for the cost of printing it.

You may receive this file in .pdf form via email, or you can request a hard copy be mailed to you. Your program can be printed on any paper that you wish and may include a cover; however, **the interior of the program (the order of the liturgy) will be provided to you and should retain that format.** Details of

the program should be discussed with the parish secretary before any work is done on a worship aid. Here at Saint Mary of the Annunciation, the image of the church is always on the cover, and the history of the parish is also included.

### **THE WITNESSES (BEST MAN & MAID/MATRON OF HONOR)**

While the entire assembly is a witness to your wedding, three individuals have a special role in the sacred liturgy for the Church. The priest/deacon acts as the Church's official witness. In addition, the roles usually called the best man and maid or matron of honor fulfill the Church requirement as the two other witnesses who formally attest to the fact that the wedding took place. They need not be Catholic or even baptized.

### **OTHER ATTENDANTS IN THE WEDDING**

It is important to keep in mind that many people feel honored to be asked to be in your wedding; however, the more attendants there are, the less of an honor it tends to be.

For the purposes of order and decorum in the sacred liturgy at Saint Mary of the Annunciation, **the bride and groom are permitted up to seven attendants each**, although a smaller number is preferable. The limit of seven each *includes* the bridesmaids and maid of honor, the best man and groomsmen, flower girls and ring bearers, and all honor attendants. A great number of attendants creates a "wall" of people near the altar. Your attendants may be Catholic or non-Catholic. If you have honorary attendants beyond the seven-person limit, they are to be seated before the liturgy begins. They do not process in.

### **GREETERS**

Greeters are important to your wedding. They stand at the door to welcome your guests as they enter the church and give them your printed worship program. Your greeters may be Catholic or non-Catholic.

### **MILITARY-STYLE WEDDINGS**

We welcome our military men and women to wear their uniforms. Military swords and other secular weapons (real or ceremonial) may be worn but are never permitted to be used inside the church. Ceremonial displays, such as the

saber or sword arch, are permitted in the vestibule and outside the church.

## **CROSS BEARER**

Since all weddings occur within the sacred liturgy of the Church, it is most appropriate that the Procession be led by the Cross of Christ. The cross bearer will be one of our parish's altar servers.

## **RING BEARERS AND FLOWER GIRLS**

All children within the wedding party must be **at least five years old**. Flower girls may not drop petals on the floor.

## **DECORUM**

Please keep modesty in mind when planning dresses for the bride and her attendants. Strapless, spaghetti strap, backless or other revealing dresses are not appropriate for a church, unless the shoulders are covered by a shawl. Our Wedding Coordinator is prepared to offer shawls to those who need them.

On the day of the wedding, the groomsmen usually act as ushers before the wedding. To maintain a spirit of quiet prayer and preparation, they should seat each guest as they arrive. The vestibule of the church is not an appropriate place to catch up with people one has not seen in a long while – this is the purpose of the reception. The groomsmen should as a group refrain from unnecessary talking or noise.

Receiving lines may take place at your reception but not at the church.

## **FOOD, SMOKING, ALCOHOL, CELL PHONES, AND MORE**

No food or drink is permitted in the church or anywhere on the grounds of our parish before, during, or after the wedding and rehearsal. The use of chewing gum or tobacco is always prohibited.

The wedding party is expected to refrain from using *any* alcoholic beverages before the rehearsal and the wedding. The Wedding Coordinator has permission from the Pastor to remove from the church anyone under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Please remind everyone in the wedding party to preserve the sacred character of this event. Further, if the bride and/or groom

is under the influence before the wedding, the Wedding Coordinator has the authority to cancel the wedding since, by canon law, valid marital consent may be placed only by persons who are not impaired. Should this occur, there will be no refund of the wedding fees.

All cell phones must be turned off so that they may not disturb the sacred liturgy. The wedding program will state this.

No rice, birdseed, confetti, bubbles, or flower petals are to be used in the church, in front of the church, or on the sidewalk outside the church. These objects can be hazardous underfoot and/or difficult to clean up.

### **LECTORS/READERS**

At the wedding, the texts of Sacred Scripture must be proclaimed from the ambo (pulpit), and the person who performs this function is called a lector. The lectors are practicing Catholics and preferably perform this ministry in their home parishes. Those whom you select should be good public speakers and must be at the rehearsal to practice the proclamation in the church.

The Lectors read the First and Second readings. One of them also leads the General Intercessions which are after the Rite of Marriage. The Cantor leads the Responsorial Psalm.

### **GIFT BEARERS (NUPTIAL MASS ONLY)**

Two people from the assembly may be invited to bring forward the gifts of bread and wine for a Nuptial Mass.

### **GUESTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Our church should be able to handle needs for disabled guests. Please inform the wedding coordinator of guests with special needs.

### **THE CIVIL MARRIAGE LICENSE**

You may obtain the South Carolina marriage license in any county in the state. As soon as you receive it, please mail it to our parish offices for safe keeping. **Neither the rehearsal nor the wedding liturgy can take place unless the civil license is on hand with the Wedding Coordinator.** The bride and groom

will sign the license at the rehearsal. The officiating clergy will sign it after the wedding liturgy. The Wedding Coordinator will then give the bride and groom their copy. There is no ceremony around the signing of the civil license. It will be signed in the sacristy and never in the sanctuary.

## **THE REHEARSAL**

**The Rehearsal is scheduled for Friday at 5:00 pm or 6:00 pm.** When two rehearsals occur on the same date, the first party whose reservation is confirmed has the first pick of rehearsal times. **Please inform your party that they should arrive at the church at least 20 minutes early.** Parking is challenging. The rehearsal will start at the designated hour no matter who is present or absent. **The rehearsal is limited to 45 minutes.** The Wedding Coordinator will lead you through the liturgy during the rehearsal. The bride and groom must both be present and participate in the rehearsal.

Because of the nature of the sound system and acoustics of the church, it is best to have your readers present so that they may practice their readings at the rehearsal. They will read from the sacred books of the liturgy we provide and not from photocopies.

Please remember to bring your printed worship programs to the rehearsal.

## **DRESSING FOR THE WEDDING**

Due to limited facilities, everyone must arrive dressed. We are not able to provide a space for the wedding party to dress. If changing rooms are required, private arrangements should be made with one of the neighboring inns or hotels.

## **THE DAY OF THE WEDDING**

**The groom, groomsmen, ushers, and greeters should arrive at the church at least one hour prior to the liturgy.** The parents, greeters, ushers, readers, groom, and groomsmen report directly to the church. **The bride and her attendants should arrive no less than 15 minutes before the start of the wedding and may use the parish hall next door for final preparations.** The Wedding Coordinator will bring them into the vestibule about five minutes to the hour.

In your communications with your guests, **please urge them to arrive at least 20 minutes early since parking is a challenge.** No one wants to be late and to suffer the embarrassment of disrupting the wedding.

**It is essential to begin the liturgy on time, especially out of respect for your guests. The late arrival of the bride or groom may result in the cancellation of the wedding.** If an immediate family member is running late, consult with the Wedding Coordinator. She will determine when the wedding will begin.

The Rite of Christian Matrimony, the official liturgical book of the Catholic Church, calls for the officiant priest or deacon to meet the bride and groom at the front doors of the church where he welcomes them in. Once welcomed, all are to process together to the altar to begin the liturgy. This liturgical action symbolizes our common journey together toward heaven and highlights the new life of husband and wife who are to help one another reach eternal life with God.

In the United States, the common custom is to have the groom and best man appear via a side door and then to have the bridal party process down the aisle with much pomp. Everyone remains seated until the bride arrives. This style of procession does not emphasize the equality of man and woman in marriage.

At Saint Mary of the Annunciation, we use a form that is faithful to the Church's teachings on the equality of spouses while preserving the custom that the groom and bride do not see each other on the wedding day. Everyone in the wedding liturgy — officiant, altar servers, best man, groomsmen, groom, maid/matron of honor, bridesmaids, ring bearer, flower girls, bride with escort — processes together from the vestibule of the church to the altar. The Wedding Coordinator will form the procession. To begin the liturgy, she will ring a bell in the rear of the church that is the signal for everyone in the congregation, starting with the mother of the bride (if present), to stand for the procession to enter the church. **This form is used at all weddings at Saint Mary of the Annunciation without exception.**

**The wedding liturgy is an act of prayer and worship of Almighty God.** We assemble in a church to express our faith in Jesus Christ and to ask God's blessings on the couple. This is a sacred experience which deserves decorum and respect.

When the liturgy concludes, the bride and groom offer one another a simple kiss. This is not the occasion for clapping, whooping, or other inappropriate behavior. We are in a church and in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. Kindly make sure your guests understand and respect the proper protocol for a church wedding.

Regarding photography, please consult with your photographer before the wedding day to determine what photos you would like. Please note the photography policy below, especially the 30-minute limit for photos following the liturgy.

Our parish offices will mail to you a Certificate of Matrimony signed by the Pastor of Saint Mary of the Annunciation.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY**

To protect the sacred character of your wedding liturgy, the requirements for photography at Saint Mary of the Annunciation may be different from your experience of other weddings. It is essential that the policies given to your photographer by the Wedding Coordinator be followed without exception, and your careful attention to these requirements during the planning session with your photographer may save a great deal of grief on the wedding day. Your photographer must speak with our Wedding Coordinator to review these policies prior to the wedding.

An outline of our guidelines for photographers is attached so that you may give it to your photographer ahead of time.

**We reserve the right to exclude from working at our church any photographer who has not abided by these policies in the past.**

Absolutely no flash photography or external lighting is permitted *during* the wedding liturgy, as this detracts from the sacred worship during the liturgy.

If a video is to be made, all the above restrictions also apply. The videographer should consult the Wedding Coordinator prior to setting up cameras.



**POLICIES FOR WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS FOR  
SAINT MARY OF THE ANNUNCIATION**

*Please provide the following policies to your wedding photographer and/or videographer prior to the wedding day.*

1. Flash photography is **not** permitted during the ceremony. It is allowed during the processional, recessional and the photo session following the ceremony.
2. Photographers must remain behind the last row of guests during the ceremony and be stationary throughout the event.
3. Photography and videography from the Choir Loft **may be permitted. Photographers must contact the Wedding Coordinator.**
4. Photography of the groomsmen should be completed 40 minutes prior to the ceremony.
5. Following the wedding liturgy, 30 minutes will be allotted for taking pictures on the altar. Should more time be needed, additional pictures may be taken on the church grounds.
6. Please contact the Wedding Coordinator, Rosie Ryan, to discuss the appropriate placement of video cameras. Video cameras must be stationary during the ceremony and no affixed lighting is permitted. No cameras are permitted in the sanctuary (i.e., behind the communion rail or in the side chapels) at any time.
- 7.

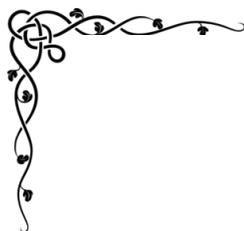
**REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION TO BE SENT BY  
THE OTHER CATHOLIC PARISH TO  
SAINT MARY OF THE ANNUNCIATION**

**1. PRE-NUPTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE:** The Pastor or his delegate will complete this form with you. It requests certain biographical and attitudinal information necessary for the valid reception of the Sacrament of Matrimony. After your wedding, this information remains in the permanent files at the church. If you are a non-parishioner, this will be completed by your pastor or his delegate at your local parish. All pre-nuptial paperwork must be received no later than three months prior to the wedding date.

**2. CERTIFICATE(S) OF BAPTISM:** Catholics must contact the church of their Baptism and request a **current, newly issued** Certificate of Baptism, **dated within six (6) months of the wedding date, with NO NOTATIONS marked in the Matrimony section (unless there has been a previous marriage).** Neither a photocopy nor the original certificate will be acceptable. A non-Catholic should request a letter on official letterhead stationery from his/her church indicating the date and place of Baptism.

**3. CERTIFICATE OR PROOF OF COMPLETION OF PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING, including participation in a Natural Family Planning introductory session,** is due three months prior to wedding date.

**4. DECREE OF NULLITY IF APPLICABLE:** If the bride or groom has a Decree of Nullity from a Catholic Church Diocesan Tribunal, a copy of the Decree must be sent to us with the application.



**SAINT MARY OF THE ANNUNCIATION  
CATHOLIC CHURCH**

THE FIRST CATHOLIC PARISH IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

Offices: 89 Hasell Street · Church: 93 Hasell Street

Charleston, South Carolina 29401

843.722.7696 · sma.church

**FORM A**

**WEDDING AGREEMENT**

**Requested Wedding Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Requested Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Requested Rehearsal Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Requested Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

<i>PRINT LEGIBLY</i>	<b>GROOM</b>	<b>BRIDE</b>
Full Name		
Street Address		
City / State / Zip		
Cell Number		
Email Address		
Parish Name		
Parish City		
Married Before?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes: How did it end? <input type="checkbox"/> Death <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce <input type="checkbox"/> Decree of Nullity*	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes: How did it end? <input type="checkbox"/> Death <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce <input type="checkbox"/> Decree of Nullity*

\* Include a copy of the Decree of Nullity with this Agreement.

**Liturgy:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Mass (two Catholics)**    \_\_\_\_\_ **Liturgy of the Word (mixed marriage)**

**Official Witnesses:**    **Best Man** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Maid/** \_\_\_\_\_ **Matron of Honor** \_\_\_\_\_

**Catholic Officiant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**His Parish's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**His Parish's Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

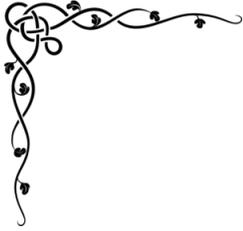
**His Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **His Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

*We have thoroughly read the policies concerning the celebration of weddings at Saint Mary of the Annunciation. We agree to comply with these and any subsequent additions to the policy of the Parish and/or Diocese. We understand and accept the conditions that we and all members of our wedding party, as well as all persons attending our wedding and/or rehearsal, must follow regarding personal conduct and the use of the designated parish facilities. Furthermore, we release Saint Mary of the Annunciation and the Diocese of Charleston, as well as their agents, from all claims and demands for injuries and/or damages which may or shall result while in said facilities or anywhere on the premises. We, the bride and groom, assume full financial responsibility for any lost, stolen, or damaged personal, communal, or church properties.*

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_    **Signature of the Groom**    **Date**    \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_    **Signature of the Bride**    **Date**

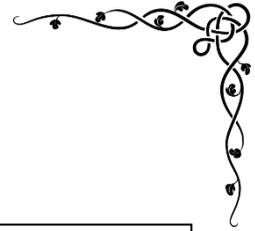
<b>Office Use:</b> Date Received _____/_____/_____ By _____ Check # _____ \$ _____
Application Approved /s/ _____, Pastor    Date _____/_____/_____
Couple Notified (Date) _____/_____/_____ By _____    Rev. 022318





**SAINT MARY OF THE ANNUNCIATION  
CATHOLIC CHURCH**

THE FIRST CATHOLIC PARISH IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES  
Offices: 89 Hasell Street · Church: 93 Hasell Street  
Charleston, South Carolina 29401  
843.722.7696 · sma.church



**FORM C  
Page 1**

**MARRIAGE OFFICIANT AGREEMENT**

<i>PRINT LEGIBLY</i>	<b>GROOM</b>	<b>BRIDE</b>
<b>Full Name</b>		

To the Pastor of Saint Mary of the Annunciation Parish:

I hereby certify that I have read the policies and procedures for weddings at Saint Mary of the Annunciation and, as the officiant for the wedding, agree to abide by everything as outlined, that is:

Initial each line

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I shall follow the liturgical laws of the celebration of Matrimony in the Roman Catholic Church and shall not introduce, modify or delete any of the rubrics.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I shall provide my own alb and cincture. I shall arrive at the church at least 30 minutes prior to the rehearsal and the wedding liturgy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I shall follow the directions of the parish Wedding Coordinator and agree that she shall have the final word in all matters, liturgical and otherwise, pertaining to the rehearsal and wedding liturgy, according to the policies and procedures of Saint Mary of the Annunciation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I agree that there will be no ceremony surrounding the signing of the civil marriage license and that the signing will take place privately in the sacristy by the direction of the Wedding Coordinator.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I agree that the Wedding Coordinator is a representative of the Pastor and has the authority to have removed from the premises, including through the assistance of the police of the City of Charleston, any person who is intoxicated, under the influence, disruptive, or harmful in any fashion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I understand that the Wedding Coordinator is empowered by the Pastor to cancel the rehearsal and/or the wedding on their scheduled days according to the policies and procedures of Saint Mary of the Annunciation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I agree that I am not to introduce the couple by name at the end of the liturgy. I agree that I not to inaugurate applause, whooping, or any other such behavior that harms the decorum and respect for the sacred liturgy and the Blessed Sacrament.

**Continue to page 2.**

**SAINT MARY OF THE ANNUNCIATION  
MARRIAGE OFFICIANT AGREEMENT**

**FORM C  
Page 2**

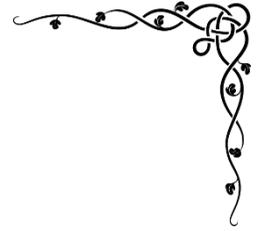
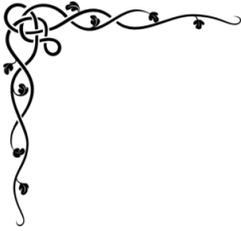
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I understand that, should I violate this agreement and the policies and procedures of Saint Mary of the Annunciation, I may be denied canonical delegation by the Pastor to officiate at future wedding liturgies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I hereby request canonical delegation to officiate at the wedding liturgy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I agree to request from my Ordinary or Superior a letter of my good standing as a cleric of the Catholic Church to the Bishop of Charleston. (Does not apply to clergy incardinated in or approved for ministry in the Diocese of Charleston.)

Signature of Priest or Deacon	Printed Name
Today's Date	
Parish Name	Email
City and State	Telephone

Parish Seal Required

**Delegation granted.**

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
**Pastor**  
**Saint Mary of the Annunciation**



**SAINT MARY OF THE ANNUNCIATION  
CATHOLIC CHURCH**

*THE FIRST CATHOLIC PARISH IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES*

Offices: 89 Hasell Street · Church: 93 Hasell Street

Charleston, South Carolina 29401

843.722.7696 · sma.church

**FORM D**

**PASTOR'S PERMISSION TO MARRY**

Required of Catholic Parties to Marriage

<i>PRINT LEGIBLY</i>	<b>CATHOLIC GROOM</b>	<b>CATHOLIC BRIDE</b>
<b>Full Name</b>		

To the Pastor of Saint Mary of the Annunciation Parish:

I, the undersigned, certify that I am the pastor of the Catholic party named above by reason of his or her domicile and that he or she is a registered, active, and contributing member of my parish.

Further, I give my permission for him/her to celebrate his/her wedding liturgy at Saint Mary of the Annunciation.

_____	_____
Signature of Pastor	Printed Name
_____	
Today's Date	
_____	_____
Parish Name	Email
_____	_____
City and State	Telephone

**Parish Seal Required**