



# Sacrament of Marriage at St. Francis Xavier

Thank you for your interest in the Sacrament of Matrimony at St. Francis Xavier. Marriage forms a basic building block of society wherein two people commit to each other, in good times and in bad, and so live out the Christian vocation of love.

As a sacrament, matrimony occurs within the community of believers and we are blessed here at St. Francis Xavier to witness weddings throughout the year but particularly in the spring, summer, and autumn. It is our joy and responsibility to respond to those seeking this sacrament, whether they are registered members of the parish or Catholics who live within our parish's geographic boundaries.

"Three complementary relationships lie at the heart of the sacrament of marriage: 1) the marital relationship, the joining of the bride and groom; 2) the reliance on God shared by bride and groom; and 3) the bonds between the community gathered and the wedding couple" (A Marriage Sourcebook, edited by Baker, Gibley, and Gibley).

The connection between the couple and the community must not to be overlooked as the grace that flows from the strengthening of their love, through the sacrament and their continued, recurrent commitment to one other, radiates outwards and is a significant source of blessing for the entire parish.

As an aid to helping your own planning and situating your desire for this sacrament within the life of the parish, here are

some guidelines to bear in mind.

- We ask that those seeking to be married be active members of the parish for at least 6 months prior to any planning or scheduling conversations.
- Wedding fees are set for registered, active parishioners and include costs for the space, the musicians, and the celebrant. If you are not registered, active parishioners and we are able to host the event, we will ask that you cover actual costs (please see the fee schedule page).
- The Diocese of Helena is one of very few to allow off-site weddings; however, there are conditions and steps that must be taken to request permission for this to happen. Please ask Pam or one of our priests for more information.

If you are ready to begin the conversation about the sacrament of matrimony, please email Pam Brigham at [pbrigham@sfxmissoula.org](mailto:pbrigham@sfxmissoula.org) or call 541-6041

**Q.** Who can be married at St. Francis Xavier Church?

**A.** Normally, marriage at St. Francis Xavier Church is a sacrament for those who are registered, active parishioners. We have a long history in the Catholic Church of celebrating the sacraments as a community of faith. There are exceptions to this ideal and we can discuss the possibilities.

**Q.** Who officiates at our weddings?

**A.** Normally, weddings at St. Francis Xavier are officiated by one of our priests. Another Catholic priest or deacon can officiate if there are pastoral reasons, with permission.

**Q.** Are those who are not Catholic able to be married at St. Francis Xavier?

**A.** Yes, if they are marrying a Catholic parishioner.

**Q.** Are those who have been previously married able to be married at St. Francis Xavier ?

**A.** If a spouse is deceased or if there has been an annulment then a marriage is possible. Those who are divorced but have not sought an annulment should discuss the possibilities by contacting our annulment counselor, Ann Moriarity at [annmoriarity@hotmail.com](mailto:annmoriarity@hotmail.com)

**Q.** What preparation is required for couples wishing to be married?

**A.** Marriage in the Catholic Church is a sacrament and a lifetime commitment. As such, there are expectations of wedding preparation including attendance at an Engaged Retreat, a comprehensive Pre-Marriage Inventory or questionnaire and time spent with one of the sponsor couple teams here at St. Francis Xavier. This will be part of the conversation you have with the director of Family Services. A \$100 fee is required for our marriage prep program.

**Q.** When do weddings happen at St. Francis Xavier ?

**A.** Saturday is the usual day for weddings at either 10 am or 1 pm as well as Friday afternoon. Also, we do not celebrate weddings during the entire season of Lent.

**Q.** Do Catholic weddings always take place in the context of a Mass?

**A.** Not always. Weddings can be celebrated either during the celebration of Mass or as part of a Liturgy of the Word. Normally, weddings are celebrated during Mass only when both the bride and the groom are Catholic.

**Q.** Are there policies regarding the content of the wedding service, such as the readings and the music?

**A.** There are policies and norms around what happens during the wedding celebration. A marriage packet is available from Pam which includes environmental and music guidelines, as well as the book "Together for Life" from which to choose your readings. We assign a liturgy coordinator to each couple who

will assist you with choosing your readings, facilitating the rehearsal and wedding ceremony. There is a \$100 fee for this service. Also, please be sure to discuss your plans with the celebrant when you meet with him.

**Q.** How does a parishioner get a wedding scheduled?

**A.** Scheduling is an important part of the process of wedding planning and it is important to note that St. Francis Xavier Church is often scheduled far in advance. Once you have met with Pam we will be able to begin the conversation about scheduling your wedding.

**Q.** How does someone who is not an active member of the parish arrange for a wedding at St. Francis Xavier?

**A.** Normally, weddings at St. Francis Xavier are for those who are regularly active parishioners. If there are reasons why you believe your wedding should take place at St. Francis Xavier, please discuss this with one of our priests.

**Q.** What are the fees for a wedding at St. Francis Xavier?

**A.** Weddings at St. Francis Xavier require the participation of staff and use of the space and as such there are fees involved. The general fee for the space helps defray the costs of our services. The recommended donation for registered, active parishioners is \$300. The fee for those who are not registered, active parishioners is \$500. There are also fees for musicians as well as the celebrant, in either case, in addition to those mentioned above for marriage prep and a liturgy coordinator. For a full list of fees, please see the fee schedule page.