**Wedding policy for St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, St. Joseph, MO.**

**St. Francis Xavier parish community invites you to a sacramental marriage experience.**

According to the diocesan policy, a nine-month interval is required between the initial contact with the priest assisting with the marriage and the date of the marriage. A current baptismal certificate is to be made available from the church of baptism.

**The engaged couple must be free to marry:**

* Neither one has been previously married.
* A former spouse has died.
* An annulment from a previous marriage has been obtained from a diocese.

Either the bride-to-be or the groom-to-be must be registered to St. Francis Xavier, or he/she must obtain permission from the parish where they are registered to have the wedding at St. Francis. If the wedding is to take place at another church - Catholic or non-Catholic- permission must be obtained from the diocese through the priest who is providing marriage preparation. The marriage ceremony must be celebrated in a church.

**Marriage preparation includes:**

* Meet with one of the priests of St. Francis for a preliminary interview.
* Fill out the marriage preparation form, which will be filed at the church where the marriage takes place.
* Use the FOCCUS inventory- an assessment of readiness.
* Meet with a “lead couple” from St. Francis Parish or participate in and Engaged Encounter Weekend (which is to be scheduled by the couple).
* Meet with the Presider of the wedding to plan for the rehearsal and wedding ceremony.

**For the marriage ceremony:**

* Meet with the music director of St. Francis (816) 616-8153, unless the couple has musicians outside the parish; if outside musicians are to be used, they need to be familiar with sacred music and with the marriage ceremony.
* Obtain a marriage license from a Missouri Courthouse in advance of the wedding. The license is good for 30 days. Will need photo ID’s and a Social Security number.
* Wedding ceremonies can be planned for Friday evenings. A Saturday wedding should begin no later than 1:30 pm or at 6:00 pm or later on Saturday evening. Rehearsals are normally scheduled the evening before the wedding date, depending on schedules.
* The cost of the use of the church is $500 for members of St. Francis and $750 for non-members. A donation to the priest performing the wedding is optional. The donation to the organist is $125; $100 to the cantor; $10 to the servers.
* No seeds or rice is to be used. Someone needs to be assigned to remove everything that is brought in for the wedding, and all pews and floors are cleaned after the ceremony.
* No food or drink in the church sanctuary, other than water.

To use the Parish Center for the reception, contact the Parish Center manager: (816) 232-8449.