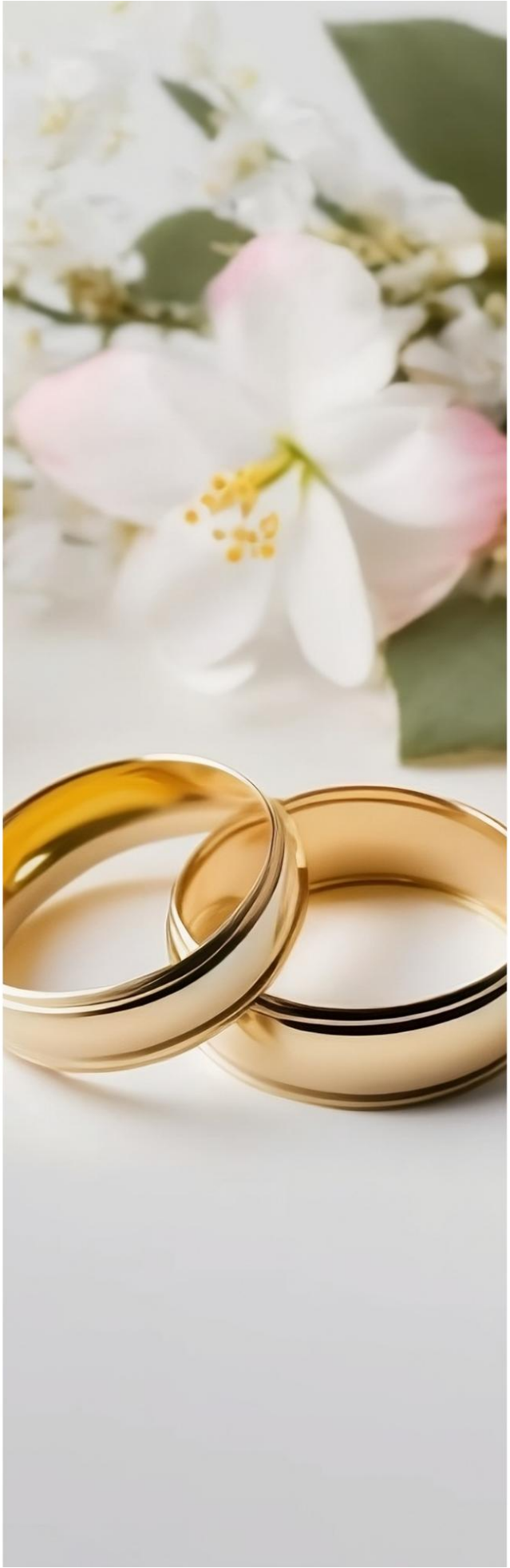

Matrimony Guidelines

HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH
EST. 1966

24 Pope Avenue
Hilton Head Island, SC 29928

843.785.2895

www.holyfamilyhhi.org
info@holyfamilyhhi.org

THEOLOGY OF THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

Sacred Scripture begins with the creation and union of man and woman and ends with "the wedding feast of the Lamb" (Rev 19:7, 9). Scripture often refers to marriage, its origin and purpose, the meaning God gave to it, and its renewal in the covenant made by Jesus with his Church. Man and woman were created for each other. By their marriage, the couple witnesses Christ's spousal love for the Church. One of the Nuptial Blessings in the liturgical celebration of marriage refers to this in saying, "Father, you have made the union of man and wife so holy a mystery that it symbolizes the marriage of Christ and his Church."

The Sacrament of Marriage is a covenant, which is more than a contract. Covenant always expresses a relationship between persons. The marriage covenant refers to the relationship between the husband and wife, a permanent union of persons capable of knowing and loving each other and God. The celebration of marriage is also a liturgical act, appropriately held in a public liturgy at church. Catholics are urged to celebrate their marriage within the Eucharistic Liturgy.

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults

THE WEDDING LITURGY: WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH

A wedding liturgy is a religious ritual that focuses, not only on the couple, but on the entire community gathered who offers praise and thanksgiving to the God who loves us and who manifests, in a special way, that love in the persons of the bride and groom.

The community of family and friends then, are not mere spectators but active participants in the wedding liturgy. In preparing your wedding liturgy, you encourage your family and friends to become active participants in the ritual actions, words, songs, and gestures of a people gathered for prayer. Catholic wedding liturgies are celebrated inside our parish churches. The Bishop of Charleston ***does not*** permit weddings in locations other than our parish churches.

Your choice of Scripture readings, hymns, sung responses and acclamations, processions, postures, the place of bride and groom and attendants, and prayers must help all gathered to enter into the celebration, even if many or most of the assembly (congregation) is not Catholic.

Every Mass consists of a Liturgy of the Word (entrance rite, readings, homily, and general intercessions) and a Liturgy of the Eucharist (presentation of bread and wine, the Eucharistic prayer and communion). When a wedding is celebrated at Mass, the rite of marriage takes place after the homily and before the general intercessions. The Liturgy of the Eucharist then follows. When a wedding is celebrated outside of Mass, it is celebrated in the Liturgy of the Word in which the rite of marriage takes place after the homily and before the general intercessions. This rite concludes with prayers and blessings. Our resource for liturgy preparation can be found at www.foryourmarriage.org

When both parties are active Catholics, the celebration of the wedding usually occurs within Mass. When either the bride or groom is not Catholic, the celebration of the wedding usually occurs outside of Mass.

NEWLY ENGAGED

Congratulations! The first step in your wedding preparation is to contact the Holy Family Parish Office ***at least six months before your anticipated wedding date***. A meeting will be arranged with the Pastor and he will discuss the marriage preparation process, as well as how to obtain and complete the necessary documents. Prior to your meeting, please complete the **Marriage Inquiry/Agreement Form**. If you are a non-parishioner, living out of the area, a phone or video conference can be arranged.

In order to prevent any miscommunication, the Parish Office will only coordinate wedding details with the bride and groom – which includes but is not limited to scheduling, preparation, documents, liturgy selections and logistical questions regarding the Mass.

ANULLMENTS

If the bride or groom has been previously married, and the prior spouse is living, and there has not been a Decree of Nullity issued, please contact your Pastor. The prior marriage will need to be addressed before initiating the wedding planning process.

NON-PARISHIONER SACRAMENT PREPARATION

Non-parishioners are welcome to be married at Holy Family. It is expected that non-parishioners will receive sacrament preparation at their "home parish." If you are a non-parishioner, please have your pastor complete the **Pastor's Agreement to Prepare Couple** and return to Holy Family as soon as possible. This document is necessary to reserve your wedding date.

The Pastor at your home parish will also need to send Holy Family a letter of delegation, granting his permission for a named priest/deacon from Holy Family to celebrate the wedding. This document must be signed and sealed by your Pastor and parish.

PARISHIONER SACRAMENT PREPARATION

Registered, active parishioners will prepare at Holy Family. Upon your initial meeting with the Pastor, he will discuss the specifics of the Natural Family Planning, Pre-Cana/Engaged Encounter sessions, which can be found online.

UPDATED BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE

Couples will need to provide an updated/notated Baptismal Certificate. This can be obtained by contacting your "church of baptism" – the church where you were baptized. The church of baptism will have your full sacramental record, including when you received First Communion and Confirmation. Electronic copies are not permitted and the certificate must have the parish seal. Please contact your church of baptism soon, as these requests may take up to 10 days to process. The certificate may be mailed directly to Holy Family.

If your fiancé is non-Catholic and was baptized elsewhere, they too need to provide a baptismal certificate from their church of baptism.

CHURCH SCHEDULING

Because of its beauty and location, Holy Family is a popular place to be married. Limitations of time, resources and personnel prevent the parish from honoring the request of every couple wishing to be married here.

Wedding scheduling guidelines:

- Saturday: celebrated at 2:00 pm due to confession at 3:30 pm and the evening Vigil Mass at 5:00 pm.
- Sunday/Holy Days of Obligation: weddings on those days are not permitted in the Diocese of Charleston.
- Weekday: times are flexible, depending on the availability of the church and the celebrant.
- Lent: Weddings are permitted during Lent, but not during Holy Week. Statues in the church may be covered during certain periods of Lent and floral arrangements need to be muted.

Rehearsal scheduling guidelines:

- Rehearsal time is determined when the wedding is scheduled. Please allot (1) hour to practice.
- Scheduled for the afternoon or evening before the wedding. However, this may not always be possible due to conflicts with other events.
- The couple and those involved in the wedding liturgy will do a "walk through" of the ceremony so that everyone will be familiar with it.
- Please be punctual and properly attired. Failure to begin on time will result in reducing the rehearsal period, or the cancellation of the rehearsal.

WEDDING DATE CONFIRMATION

Your rehearsal date/time and wedding date/time are confirmed when the following have been completed:

1. You completed the **Marriage Inquiry/Agreement** and have met with the Pastor at Holy Family.
2. Your home parish has submitted the **Pastor Agreement to Prepare Couple** form (applicable to non-parishioner couples).
3. The church usage fee has been received.

SOUTH CAROLINA MARRIAGE LICENSE

Both parties must be physically present at the chosen county location when applying for a marriage license. South Carolina does have a 24-hour waiting period from the time of application until the issuance of the license, so please plan accordingly.

- The Marriage License should be delivered to the priest or deacon at the rehearsal.
- You must bring all three copies of the marriage license.
- There will be **NO** rehearsal and/or wedding without the marriage license, per South Carolina law.
- Following the ceremony, it is YOUR responsibility to return the signed license to the county of issuance within 15 days.
- Click **HERE** to learn about obtaining a marriage license in Beaufort County.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

PASTOR
Father Christopher Loester
frchristopher@holyfamilyhhi.org
843-785-2895, ext. 229

HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH ADDRESS
24 Pope Avenue
Hilton Head Island, South Carolina 29928

WEDDING INQUIRIES,
PREPARATION INFORMATION, LITURGY SELECTIONS
Merideth Johnson, Office Manager
info@holyfamilyhhi.org
843-785-2895, ext. 230

MUSIC PLANNING
Dr. Pam Kane, Director of Music
music@holyfamilyhhi.org
843-785-2895, ext. 227

BEAUFORT COUNTY
WEDDING LICENSE INFORMATION
Marriage Licenses

HILTON HEAD ISLAND
VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
www.hiltonheadisland.org

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS/NOTES:

FEE	PARISHIONER	NON-PARISHIONER	DUE
Church Usage Fee	$400	$800	Immediately, necessary to reserve wedding date, following discussion with Pastor
Musician* **Further fees will apply if additional instrumentalists are requested*	$450	$450	
Cantor	$300	$300	
Sacristan	$75	$75	
Altar Server	$30	$30	
TOTAL	**$1,255**	**$1,655**	
Celebrant	The celebrant (priest or deacon) would be grateful for any gift of thanksgiving for their participation in this most important sacrament		

CHURCH USAGE FEE & LITURGICAL SUPPORT

To reserve your date, payment for the church usage fee and liturgical support individuals (musician, cantor, sacristan, and altar server) is due at the time of booking.

- Payment may be made via check, payable to *Holy Family Catholic Church* or online by clicking **HERE** via bank account or credit.

REFUNDS/CANCELLATIONS

50% of the Church Fee is refundable if the date is cancelled at least 9 months in advance. There will be no refund if the wedding is cancelled with less than 9 months.

- Cancellation notices must be made via email by the bride or groom, and include the other party in the email and sent to info@holyfamilyhhi.org

ASSEMBLY
The fundamental ministry in any liturgy is that of the assembly: the people gathered for prayer and worship. Everyone present in the church is a member of the assembly. Individuals fulfill specific ministries as part of the assembly.

BRIDE & GROOM
In the Roman Catholic wedding liturgy, the bride and groom are the ministers of the sacrament. The priest or deacon serves as the Church's official witness. It is the couple that gives themselves, one to the other, in marriage. Since the focus will be on you during the liturgy, your behavior and attitudes may also help to set the tone for the entire assembly. Your participation in the prayers and singing can do a great deal to help all gathered feel comfortable and at ease in taking an active role in the liturgy.

WITNESSES
While the entire assembly is a witness to your wedding, three individuals have a special role to play in the liturgy and for the records of the Church. The presider acts as the Church's official witness. In addition, the two individuals who stand with you – traditionally, the best man and the maid or matron of honor – fulfill a requirement as witnesses who formally attest to the fact that the wedding took place. They need not be Catholic or even baptized. Though not traditional, it is possible for these two witnesses to be exclusively male or female.

ATTENDANTS AS GREETERS AND USHERS
The groomsmen and bridesmaids may fulfill a critical role in your wedding liturgy by serving as greeters and ushers for those who gather for the wedding. In acting as the initial ministers of hospitality, they can greet the people as they enter the church, give them a printed program and guide them to a seat near the rest of the assembly. Additionally, members of the wedding party can also encourage the participation of the assembly by their attentiveness to and participation in the prayers and singing.

Arrival Time:

- The groom and groomsmen are expected to arrive ready for the liturgy not less than one-half hour prior to the wedding. There is no preparation room for the groom or the groomsmen.
- The groomsmen are to assemble in the vestibule of the church to help in the ministry of hospitality.
- The groom and best man will wait away from the people as instructed by the pastor at the rehearsal.
- The bride and bridesmaids are expected to arrive ready for the liturgy not less than one-half hour prior to the wedding. They will wait away from the people as instructed by the pastor at the rehearsal.

FLOWER GIRL(S)/RING BEARER(S)
Using young children to serve as flower girls and ring bearers can be a wonderful addition to the wedding.

DRESSING APPROPRIATELY FOR THE WEDDING LITURGY
Your wedding in the church is a reverent liturgy. You are being married in the presence of the Lord. You will spend a lot of time choosing a bridal gown, dresses for the bridesmaids and flower girls, and suits or tuxes for the men. These choices should show respect and reverence for being in the Lord's house.

WEDDING CONSULTANTS
The priest or deacon is in charge of the wedding rehearsal/liturgy and makes the final decisions governing the liturgy. The parish does provide an on-site wedding coordinator from our Wedding Ministry that will assist the bride and groom at the church. Outside wedding consultants may be useful to you in many ways before and after the ceremony.

CELEBRANT
Usually, the pastor will preside at weddings, as it is his privilege to preside over the marriage of his people. When the wedding is celebrated outside of Mass, a deacon may preside. Additional priests or deacons may assist, provided they hold the necessary credentials.

- **Letters of Good Standing from a visiting priest/deacon's assigned diocese must be sent to the Parish Office 60 days prior to the wedding date.**
- If there is a priest/deacon who is a family member or close friend of the family, please explain this to the pastor at your first meeting.
- It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to contact the visiting priest/deacon.

Clergy of other faith traditions are also welcome to participate in the liturgy by reading a selection from Sacred Scripture or offering a prayer. Discuss these possibilities with the pastor. The Roman Catholic clergy always presides at the wedding and always uses the ritual of the Roman Catholic tradition.

ALTAR SERVERS
If there are guests attending your wedding who are experienced altar servers, you may ask them to serve at your wedding; otherwise servers from Holy Family will be scheduled.

GIFT BEARERS
Only for weddings within Mass, two people (or more if they have a special significance together) from the assembly may be invited by you to bring forward the gifts of bread and wine.

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION (EM)
Most often, there is not a need for EM's at weddings. However, from time to time, when large numbers of communicants dictate the necessity, EM's may be assigned to assist the priest in the distribution of the Holy Communion. EM's from Holy Family will be assigned since they understand the logistics of this ministry.

READING SELECTIONS

Couples are invited to take an active role in planning their wedding Mass. As part of this process, you may:

- Select the scripture readings
- Choose family or friends to participate in the liturgy as readers, gift bearers or other roles.

Parish Staff are available to guide you through each step so your liturgy is prayerful, meaningful and personal. Suggested readings for the Mass, may be found by visiting **For Your Marriage**.

Once you have decided on your readings please complete the **Rehearsal and Wedding Information** form which also asks for additional details of your wedding party.

- **Reading selections are due at least 30 days prior to your wedding**, so that we can prepare the readings and the Pastor can review them.
- You will receive an email copy of the readings, as they will appear in the Mass folder on the day of the wedding. Feel free to share with the readers so they may become more familiar with them.

MUSIC SELECTIONS

Music selections can be made by contacting our Music Director, Dr. Pam Kane at **music@holyfamilyhhi.org**. Only sacred music is used for the liturgy. Dr. Kane can help you choose instrumental and sung music for your liturgy.

- Other musicians may participate in your liturgy. Please discuss your desire for additional musicians with her.
- The cantor serves a key role within the liturgy in both singing parts of the liturgy particular to this ministry and in helping to lead the assembly in participation. Dr. Kane will choose the cantor, unless you request another qualified person. The cantor may also serve to sing a meditation before or during the liturgy.
- **Music selections are due at least 30 days prior to your wedding.**

CONFESSION

Catholics are to be in the state of grace when receiving the Sacrament of Matrimony. Normal parish confession times are posted. If you wish to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation at the end of the wedding rehearsal, please notify the pastor beforehand.

FURNISHINGS
The altar, ambo (pulpit), and other furniture are fixed and cannot be moved. The seasonal décor and other appointments in the church (i.e., Advent wreath, Easter candle) likewise may not be altered. We will provide kneelers, chairs, altar candles and other elements of the liturgy as needed.

RICE, BIRDSEED, CONFETTI, FLOWER PETALS
Birdseed, rice, flower petals and any other confetti-like substance may not be thrown on the parish property. It is helpful to advise guests of this policy before the wedding date.

BAGPIPER
Bagpipers are asked to play outside while guests arrive/depart the church.

UNITY CANDLES/MIXING OF SAND, ETC
The Eucharist and the exchanging of the blessed rings are the signs of unity in Marriage in the Church. Other symbols of unity – like candles and sand – are not permitted.

MILITARY-STYLE WEDDINGS
Military swords remain in the vestibule during the liturgy. Sword ceremonies may take place outside the church only.

AFTER THE WEDDING
Receiving lines after the liturgy normally are not held at the church, since they are a function of the wedding reception. If photographs are to immediately follow the ceremony, the entire wedding party may exit through the inside door to your right into the hallway until the guests have departed. Then you may return for photographs.

FLORISTS
You may use any florist you wish; preferably one familiar with our church. We suggest coordinating your colors with the liturgical season.

- Plants and flowers that will be placed in front of the altar are not to exceed 30 inches.
- Artificial flowers and artificial greenery are not permissible.
- Floral arrangements during Lent must be muted.
- If you wish, floral arrangements may be taken after the ceremony to be repurposed for other events of your wedding celebration.
- Flowers can be delivered to the church on the day of the wedding AFTER the daily Mass. Please specify the time in the Rehearsal and Wedding Information form.

PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS

Photographers and videographers are welcome to film the liturgy but may not intrude upon the liturgical prayer and action. We ask they respect the following guidelines:

- Not permitted in the sanctuary area (the sacred area around the altar where the priest, server, bride and groom carry out the liturgy).
- Must complete their work within 30 minutes following the wedding liturgy.
- Please promote the proper sense of decorum in the church.
- Please respect this timeframe, as there may be another parish function immediately following your liturgy.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Bows may be attached to the pews using only elastic bands, string or ribbon (tacks, nails, tape and metal devices are not permitted).
- Pew candle stands are not permitted.
- "Reserved" pew markers are available for use and can be decided on at the rehearsal, based on size of immediate family and bridal party.
- Aisle runners are not permitted due to the fact that it may slip and cause a walking hazard.

ALCOHOL AND SMOKING

Alcohol and smoking are not permitted anywhere on the parish property. Please be certain your guests understand this. Drinking before the wedding is not a good idea even if a person is somewhat nervous. ***The presider reserves the right to disqualify a person's participation in the wedding, including the bride and/or the groom.*** It is against SC law for the minister to officiate at a wedding where the bride and/or groom are inebriated. Please save your responsible celebrating for the reception.

COUPLE'S PREPARATION CHECKLIST

TASK	COMPLETED (✓)	NOTES
Completed the **Marriage Inquiry/Agreement Form** (pg. 2)		
Met with the Pastor of Holy Family		
Provided decree of nullity, if applicable (pg. 2)		
Pastor from home parish submitted the **Pastor's Agreement to Prepare Couple** form to Holy Family (pg. 2)		
Paid the Church Usage & Liturgical Support Fee to reserve wedding date (pg. 5)		
Notated baptismal certificate, for the bride and groom, sent to the parish where preparation is being completed (pg.2)		
Witness Affidavits for the bride and groom completed and submitted to the parish where preparation is being completed.		
Parishioner Preparation: Received paperwork from Holy Family and received links to online preparation and/or Pre-Cana meeting dates		
Non-Parishioner Preparation: preparation has begun at home parish		
Contacted the Holy Family Music Director as soon as possible to select hymns (pg. 4,8)		
At least 60 days prior: If you are having a visiting priest/deacon, a Letter of Good Standing must be provided from their assigned diocese to Holy Family (pg. 7)		
At least 60 days prior: Letter of Delegation from your home pastor, granting permission for the named Holy Family celebrant to officiate (pg. 2)		
At least 30 days prior: Submitted all liturgical selections and bridal party information using the **Rehearsal and Wedding Information** form (pg. 8)		
Applied for your South Carolina **Marriage License** (pg. 3)		
Pre-Nuptial Meeting with the priest in the weeks prior to the wedding, to be scheduled with the Parish Office & received Reconciliation (pg. 8)		