

# THE RITE OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE GUIDELINES AND FORMS



*Marriage at Cana* by Giotto (14<sup>th</sup> Cent.)

**SAINT  
GREGORY  
THE GREAT**  
CATHOLIC CHURCH

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# Congratulations!

The parish family of Saint Gregory the Great rejoices with you in your marriage engagement.

The parish staff is here to assist you in the preparation of the Sacrament of Matrimony. This booklet is offered as a guide to help you prepare for your wedding at Saint Gregory the Great Parish.

## YOUR WEDDING IN THE COMMUNITY OF THE CHURCH

In choosing to be married in the Christian faith in the Catholic tradition, you are proclaiming publicly that you desire to live out your marriage commitment in the Church, understanding that the Church is not a building or an institution but a community of people. Your wedding liturgy is an act of worship in praise to God for the love you have found in each other and as a point of strength and nourishment as you continue the journey of life together. Further, for Catholics, marriage under the auspices of the Catholic Church is a *requirement* for the marriage to be considered sacramentally, spiritually and canonically *valid*. Marriages by Catholics in a non-Catholic ceremony are allowable only with the permission of the Bishop.

## PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE

The Diocese of Charleston requires that the engaged couple spend a minimum of six months in preparation. This preparation period is often referred to as the “Pre-Cana” period.

1. The first step in your marriage planning is the reservation of the parish church. After you have read this booklet thoroughly, complete the form on the last page and bring it to the Parish Office when you have your first meeting with the pastor.

**Who will be the celebrant at your wedding?** If you are a registered, active and contributing member of Saint Gregory the Great Parish, one of our clergy (priest or deacon) will preside. The assignment of a presider from our parish is by your request and the pastor’s assignment. If you belong to another Catholic parish, it is your responsibility to contact the clergy (priest or deacon) of your parish to invite him to come here to preside.

2. After your appointment with the pastor, please contact both the **Marriage Preparation Coordinator** (Deacon Denny Burkett, 843.368.4781, [deacondenny89@gmail.com](mailto:deacondenny89@gmail.com)) and the **Music Director** (Mr. Tom Tiehel, 843.815.3110 x335, [musicdir@sgg.cc](mailto:musicdir@sgg.cc)) to begin the marriage preparation process. *It is very important that you not delay.*

### Pre Cana Preparation

- If you are a member of Saint Gregory the Great Parish, **the Pre-Cana preparation** will be coordinated by our Marriage Preparation Coordinator.
- If you are coming from another Catholic parish, please contact your own parish to learn what they offer for marriage preparation. It makes best sense that you undergo marriage preparation where you live.

**Planning the marriage liturgy itself.** All couples, those who are members of our parish and others, work with our Marriage Preparation Coordinator in planning the marriage liturgy and the Director of Music to plan the music.

**Obtaining a wedding license.** All couples must obtain a wedding license prior to their wedding and give a copy to the Executive Assistant who will create a Sacramental Marriage Certificate.

## ABOUT OUR CHURCH

The **Church of Saint Gregory the Great** (built in 2000) seats approximately 900 people and is a large, majestic space. It has a long central aisle and ample space near the sanctuary to accommodate the wedding party. There is parking for 340 cars. There is no bridal room but there is a small sitting room where the bride and her bridesmaids may gather just prior to the wedding liturgy.



The parish's previous church (built in 1932), now known as **Saint Andrew Chapel**, located two miles away at **220 Pinckney Colony Road**, seats approximately 90 people. It has no side aisles and a very small area near the sanctuary where only three bridesmaids and groomsmen may stand with the bride and groom. It is a beautiful location on the marsh for smaller, more intimate weddings. There is a parking area for about 40 cars. There is no bridal room but a small building next door (Saint Andrew Hall) where the bride and her bridesmaids may gather just prior to the wedding liturgy.

## TENTATIVE RESERVATIONS ARE NOT ACCEPTED

Weddings may be scheduled to begin on Saturdays on the hours of 10:00 a.m, 11:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. only. Weekdays (up to 6:00 p.m.) can be proposed as long as the wedding liturgy does not conflict with parish liturgies or general parish functions. Diocesan law does not permit weddings on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation.

**Do not set any dates or times (e.g. reception location) until you have confirmed the wedding date and time with the pastor of Saint Gregory the Great. Reservations are accepted on a first-come basis when all requirements have been met.**

## THE WEDDING LITURGY: WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH

Wedding liturgies are celebrated inside our parish churches. The Bishop of Charleston does not permit weddings in locations other than our parish churches.

*Within Mass or Outside of Mass?* When both parties are active Catholics, the celebration of the wedding occurs in a Mass. When either the bride or groom is not Catholic, the celebration of the wedding occurs outside of Mass. **(Can they have Mass if one is not Catholic?)**

## THE PEOPLE IN YOUR WEDDING LITURGY

### *The Couple*

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 who gives themselves, one to the other, in marriage.

### ***The Celebrant***

The priest or deacon is the presider.

Clergy of other faith traditions are also welcome to participate in the liturgy (when not a Mass) by reading a selection from Sacred Scripture or offering a prayer. Visiting clergy may wear attire appropriate to their faith tradition.

If your presider is a Catholic clergymen visiting from another place, delegation is absolutely required by the Canon Law of the Catholic Church for your marriage to be a valid and legal one.

### ***The Witnesses***

The two individuals who stand with you -- traditionally, the best man and the maid/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 two men or two women. If you have questions about this, the Marriage Preparation Coordinator can explain.

### ***The Attendants as Greeters and Ushers***

The groomsmen and bridesmaids can 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.

Your attendants should be attired in an appropriate fashion that displays respect, modesty and decorum for the sacred liturgy. Bridesmaids should have their shoulders covered during the liturgy.

### ***The Organist and Other Musicians***

Our Director of Music is the organist and pianist for all weddings at Saint Gregory the Great. Only sacred music is used for the liturgy. Our Director of Music will help you choose music for your celebration. Other musicians can be involved in the wedding liturgy at your expense, depending upon the specific choices made in your musical program. Discuss these possibilities first with our Director of Music.



### ***Readers (Lectors)***

You may select one or two individuals, depending on the number of readings you select, to proclaim God's Word to the community gathered. They must attend the rehearsal.

### ***Altar Servers***

We schedule 3 of our parish's altar servers to assist during the liturgy. If you have your own, please inform us.

### ***Gift Bearers***

Again only for weddings within Mass, two people from the assembly may be invited to bring forward the gifts of bread and wine. More than two persons may walk in this procession but only the bread and wine are brought forward.

## ***Parish Wedding Coordinators and Outside Wedding Consultants***

The priest or deacon is in charge of the wedding liturgy and rehearsal and makes the final decisions governing the liturgy. Our parish has several volunteer wedding coordinators who assist at the rehearsal and wedding and are scheduled by our office. These coordinators are volunteer Parishioners who are trained in assisting at weddings at the Church and Chapel. They assist the Presider, the Bride & Groom and their wedding party at the rehearsal and the ceremony. They will meet your florist, prepare the church/chapel, orient your photographer & videographer and rehearse with the readers, orient the ushers and any other things that need to be addressed for your ceremony.

## **USING THE CHURCH**

### ***Furnishings***

Only those candles, candlesticks and candelabra provided by the church are permitted. Free-standing flower pedestals are unnecessary additions to the sanctuary. The altar, ambo (pulpit), and other furniture are *fixed* and cannot be moved. The seasonal decor and other appointments in the church (Advent wreath, Easter candle, baptistry) likewise may not be altered. We will provide kneelers, chairs, altar candles and other elements of the liturgy as needed.

A “unity candle” is not used in Catholic wedding liturgies.

### ***Rice, Birdseed, Confetti, Flower Petals, Bubbles***

Birdseed, rice, flower petals and any other confetti-like substance may not be thrown on parish property. Bubbles are not allowed as they make floors slippery. It is helpful to advise guests of this policy before the wedding date.

### ***Attire***

A wedding liturgy is a formal and sacred event. We are attired in a fashion that is respectful for worship in a house of God. This includes the wedding rehearsal. Ladies wearing dresses with bare backs and shoulders should cover them with a shawl or some other attire. The temperature in the church is kept quite cool for the added comfort of the bride and groom in their special wedding attire.

### ***Concerning the Disabled***

There is a ramp leading into the church and chapel for persons with mobility disabilities. Saint Andrew Hall is at ground level.

### ***Military-Style Weddings***

Sword ceremonies may take place outside the church only.

### ***After the Wedding***

Receiving lines after the liturgy may not be held at the church and instead should be a function of the wedding reception.

To insure that nothing is left in the church, please assign someone the responsibility to collect all belongings afterward.

### ***Rehearsals***

The rehearsal time should be scheduled when the wedding is scheduled. The rehearsal is usually scheduled for the afternoon or evening before the wedding. You and everyone else involved in the wedding liturgy will do a “walk through” of the ceremony so that everyone will be familiar with it. Plan an hour for your practice. Please be punctual and properly attired.



### ***Florists***

**Altar flowers must be provided. In the church this means two (2) arrangements, one for each side of the tabernacle.** You may use any florist you wish. We can recommend florists who are familiar with our church if you desire. Also, our parish has a Flower Guild of volunteers who are available to create your floral arrangements.

Artificial flowers and artificial greenery are not permitted.

Because of the penitential nature of the Lenten season, only the use of greenery is permitted. Flowers may not be used during Lent (*i.e. no floral bouquets, corsages, etc.*)

During festive seasons, especially Christmas and Easter, floral decorations may be a complement to, not a substitute for, decorations already in place for regular parish celebrations. The Advent wreath and Easter candle cannot be moved.

\*Please Note: Altar flowers are considered a donation to the church and remain there after the wedding. 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. Aisle runners are not permitted.

### ***Photographers and Videographers***

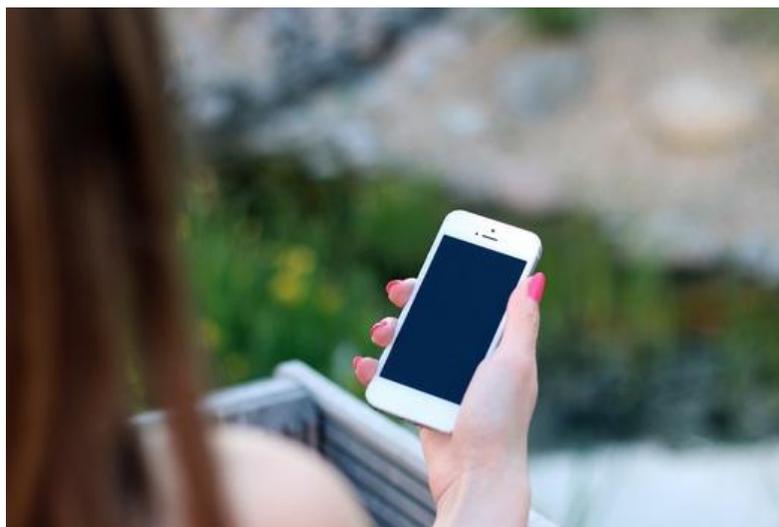
Photographers and videographers are welcome to film the liturgy but may not intrude upon the liturgical prayer and action. Flash photography and external lighting are not permitted during the liturgy. **Photographers must complete their work within 30 minutes** following the wedding liturgy.

### ***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 allowed. The presider reserves the right to disqualify a person's participation in the wedding, including the bride and/or the groom.

### ***Cell Phones and Pagers***

Please make sure you and your guests leave these in their cars.



**HERE'S A DEADLINE: TWO WEEKS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING**  
**Make sure you note this in your wedding planning calendar.**

Please make sure our parish office has these documents in our possession:

- **The civil marriage license from the State of South Carolina.** For information on how to obtain a license, visit <http://www.sciway.net/facts/marriagelicense.html>. By law the parish must have the marriage license in its possession before the wedding may occur.

**THE DAY OF YOUR WEDDING**

The groom and groomsmen are expected to arrive ready for the liturgy **one 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 bride and bridesmaids are expected to arrive ready for the liturgy **45 minutes** prior to the wedding.



## OFFERINGS AND FEES

### *Use of the Church*

The following offering schedule is effective March 12, 2016:

For Saint Gregory the Great parishioners *No fee*

- who have been registered in the parish **at least six months prior to the wedding interview, and**
- regularly use of the weekly offertory envelope system

For all others ***\$500.00***

*In cases of true financial difficulty, the pastor may dispense the couple from a portion of the church fee.*

All use of Church fees are due at the time of the reservation request. If the wedding is cancelled, you will be reimbursed the total less \$100.00. Please complete the fees form included in this packet and return it with your application.

### ***Cantor, Organist and Other Musicians***

Parish Organist ( <i>includes consultation, wedding rehearsal</i> )	<b><i>\$350.00</i></b>
Extra rehearsal ( <i>with optional instrumentalist or if more than 1 rehearsal is needed with soloist</i> )	<b><i>\$25.00/hr.</i></b>
Bench fee ( <i>paid to Director of Music when using outside organist</i> )	<b><i>\$150.00</i></b>
Cantor/Soloist ( <i>Sings all parts of the Mass as well as special music</i> )	<b><i>\$150.00</i></b>
Cantor only ( <i>sings psalm, gospel acclamation, other service music</i> )	<b><i>\$150.00</i></b>
Optional Instrumentalists – Fees vary. Please discuss this with the Director of Music	

(You are required to send the Director of Music all music fee checks **at least two weeks prior to the wedding rehearsal.**)

### **Altar Servers**

These three young ladies and/or gentlemen are presented with a gift of \$20.00 **before the wedding begins.** Usually it is the Best Man who does this.

### **THE PASTORAL STAFF**

The following individuals are able to assist you at Saint Gregory the Great in the planning of your wedding:

Pastor:	Msgr. Ronald R. Cellini	execasst@sgg.cc
Director of Music:	Tom Tiehel	musicdir@sgg.cc
Executive Assistant:	Marsha Williams	execasst@sgg.cc
Marriage Prep. Coordinator:	Deacon Denny Burkett	deacondenny89@gmail.com

Our parish offices are open Monday through Thursday from 9:15 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. and Fridays from 9:15 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.

**HERE'S HOW TO BEGIN PLANNING YOUR MARRIAGE LITURGY WITH OUR PARISH**

- 1. Review and understand all the materials in this booklet.**
- 2. Call the Executive Assistant, Marsha Williams, at 843.815.3100 ext. 324 and make an appointment to meet with the Pastor.**
- 3. Sign the Agreement below and submit it to the Pastor at your scheduled meeting.**
- 4. After your meeting with the Pastor and submitting the necessary paperwork, speak with the Executive Assistant, Marsha Williams, to have your wedding date fixed on the calendar.**
- 5. Contact the Marriage Preparation Coordinator (Deacon Denny Burkett).**

**AGREEMENT TO FOLLOW WEDDING REGULATIONS OF  
SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT PARISH**

Since we are asking to be married in Saint Gregory the Great Parish, we understand that we must follow the rules and regulations they have set and agree to do so. Our signatures below acknowledge that we have read all of the pages in the Wedding Guidelines Packet and agree to follow all of the regulations contained therein.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Bride

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Groom

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

