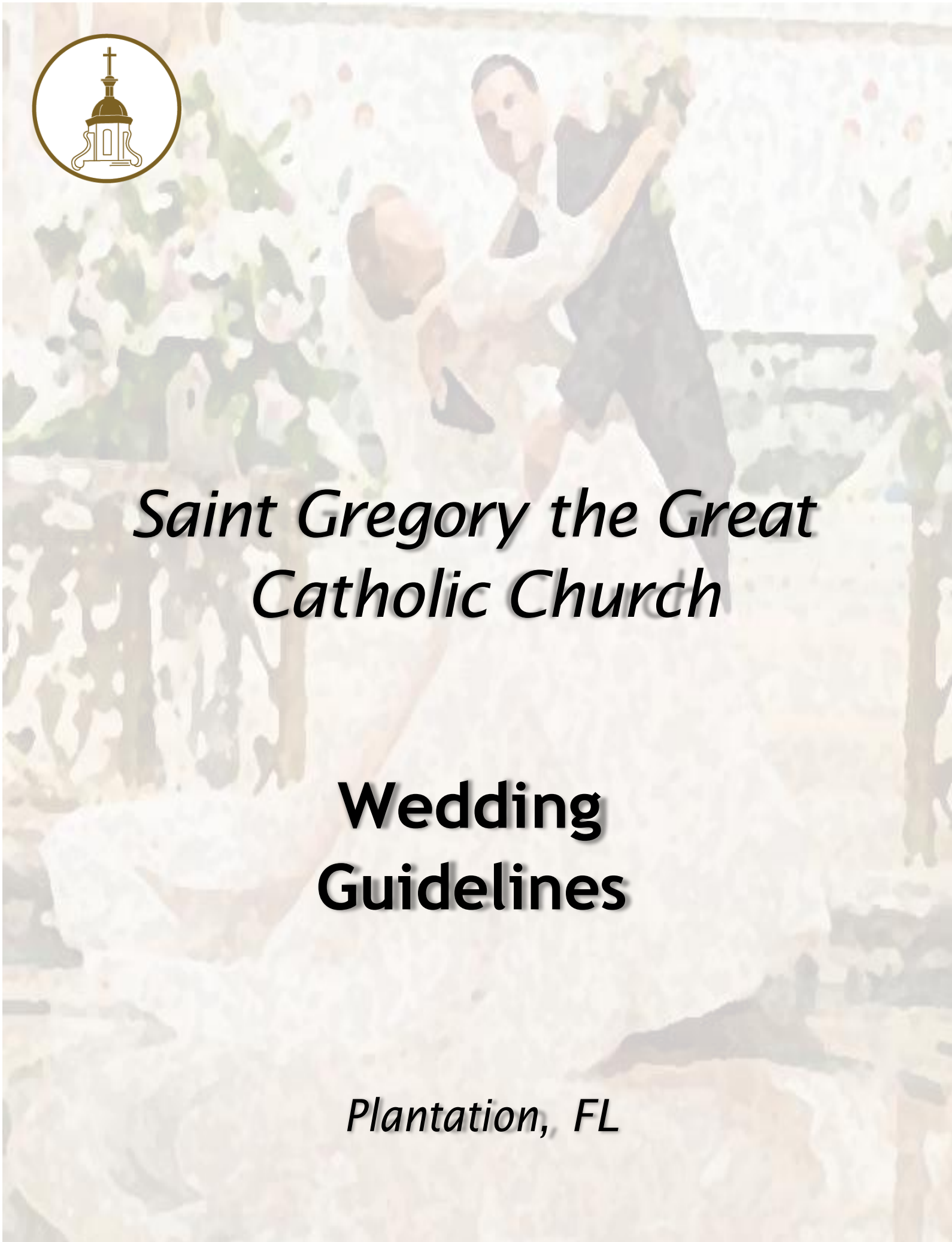

Saint Gregory the Great Catholic Church

Wedding Guidelines

Plantation, FL

Sacrament of Matrimony
Wedding Guidelines

We welcome you to Saint Gregory the Great Catholic Parish. We are glad that you have selected our church to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony. We will make every effort in helping you to prepare for this Sacrament, an important spiritual moment, one which will take you to the very presence of God. Many couples decide to celebrate their wedding day with us. Each wedding is unique and important. We anticipate that when the couples leave the church building on their wedding day, they will feel that their wedding ceremony was very personal, inspiring, and spiritual. Above all, we hope that when you leave the church building you will be well prepared for your new life as husband and wife.

We strive to work with each couple on an individual basis. We shall work with you in preparing all the necessary documentation and involving you in our marriage preparation programs so that you might be well prepared for your wedding day and throughout your married life together.

Preparation for Wedding Day and Lifetime Marriage

We feel that the best preparation for both events is your weekly attendance and celebration of the Holy Eucharist. As you prepare for a new phase in your lives, as husband and wife, faithful celebration of the Eucharist offers the opportunity to deepen your faith and spiritual lives.
Roman Catholic couples who go to Mass together every Sunday have the highest rate of successful marriages. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, reminds us that our Church today needs active practicing Roman Catholics, who give daily witness to their faith. As you prepare to live out together the Sacrament of Matrimony, we encourage you to attend Sunday Liturgy. We highly encourage that you participate in frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confession as part of your spiritual preparation.

It is our intention that these wedding guidelines will help prepare you for the wedding ceremony. As beautiful and as spiritual as we hope this day will be, the wedding day lasts only a day. Your marriage is forever. Please reflect clearly on the mission to which God has called you.

Please prayerfully recall that these following guidelines deal only with the ceremony, not with the marriage. It is our hope that most of your time, energy and concern goes into the spiritual preparation for a lifelong marriage and not simply for all the important and necessary plans, work and time in organizing the wedding ceremony.

First Step

First, the Archdiocese of Miami requires that each party, the bride and the groom, be at least 19 years old by the wedding date. The process of wedding preparation takes at least six months. This time is one of learning and growth in your love for one another in the practice of your Catholic faith.

The wedding preparation process is as follows and will be addressed within these wedding guidelines:

- Assessment
- Instruction
- Planning

Once you have read these guidelines, please email the parish to weddingcoordinator@saintgreg.org include in your email a contact telephone number. The Wedding Coordinator will send you an initial application form and you will be able to set up a **tentative** wedding date.

What's Next?

Please begin by gathering all necessary documentation

Baptismal certificate within 6 months of chosen wedding date. Simply ask the church where you were baptized to issue you a new baptismal certificate. Our Wedding Coordinator will assist the couples in all the paperwork necessary for your wedding file. Please realize that once you have been given your tentative wedding date you will have one month to submit to the parish office your updated baptismal certificates from the Church you were baptized.
We cannot accept photocopies nor fax copies.

After you have made the request for your baptismal certificate to be issued, you will be contacted by the church's office to set up an appointment with the priest that will accompany you throughout this journey toward marriage.

Non-refundable deposit. Right after the first meeting with the priest, you will give a five-hundred dollars ($500) non-refundable deposit (Only cash or check, no credit cards accepted) to book and confirm you wedding date. Kindly give all these initial documents to our office staff as it will be indicated by the priest. If you decide to ask your local parish church to complete your wedding file documentation, it is clearly understood the couple is responsible for any financial expenses incurred from the local parish church.

What are the times for wedding ceremonies?

We celebrate weddings on Friday and Saturdays. Our schedule is as follows:
Fridays at 4:00.
Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

What about a previous marriage?

Some couples come to us with a history of a prior marriage. From the beginning let the priest know your marital status/history. We are here to help you. If you were previously married, you will need to bring the following documents:

-A copy of your prior civil wedding license certificate.
-A copy of your final civil divorce decree.
*If you obtained an annulment the original annulment decree issued by a church marriage tribunal must be submitted.

If a couple needs to begin an annulment process, please know that no wedding date can be set until the annulment process is fully resolved. No wedding date, even tentative, will be given until the issue of the prior marriage is fully settled by a church marriage tribunal.

In the event that there is a civil marriage and divorce we will submit proper canonical lack of form documentation to the Tribunal of the Archdiocese of Miami, and for this process we shall need a $100.00 money order or check made payable to Saint Gregory Catholic Church.

Please be completely honest in this regard. If the issue of a prior marriage should arise later, the Pastor withholds the right to cancel the wedding date and time altogether.

What are the "A" and "B" Forms?

The “A” and “B” Forms establish your canonical freedom to marry within the Catholic Church. Both the bride and groom will have their respective “A” Forms completed by the priest. Likewise, you will ask two witnesses to go before a notary public or one of our parish priests and testify to your freedom to marry (the “B” Forms).

The two witnesses for the bride and the groom often are the parents, brothers, sisters, aunts, or cousins; in total you will have four “B” Forms, two for the bride and two for the groom. As these forms establish your canonical freedom to marry and no wedding can take place without them, please be certain that they are completed within the first two months after you have submitted your initial paper work.

What are the next steps in our sacramental preparation?

Assessment Process

Compatibility Inventory: The **FULLY ENGAGED** compatibility inventory questionnaire is mandated by the Archdiocese of Miami for every couple preparing for marriage in all Catholic churches. This program will assist you in analyzing your readiness for marriage and many important issues present in every life-long commitment. Couples learn a great deal about themselves.

The bride and groom separately read a series of statements and simply mark their individual responses with agree or disagree. The first part of the compatibility inventory questionnaire will be completed in the Parish Office. After the inventory questionnaire has been completed you will be assigned a trained parish facilitator couple with whom you will eventually meet and discuss differences and similarities noted on the compatibility inventory questionnaire. This is not a test, rather it is an important opportunity for you to grow and mature together as a couple. Couples may opt to complete the compatibility inventory questionnaire in their respective home parishes; if this is the case, the couple is responsible for any financial expenses incurred as a result of using their local parish church.

Instructional Process

Couples will also participate either in **El Camino or in Transformed in Love** pre-marriage retreat. Only one is required. You may decide to participate in one of the retreats sponsored by the Archdiocese of Miami or one sponsored elsewhere. The couple is responsible for financial expenses incurred as a result of the marriage retreat. Please bring the preparation class certificate to the office to be put in your file. No online pre- marriage retreats are permitted. All couples entering the Sacrament of Matrimony at St. Gregory must complete a **Natural Family Planning course (NFP)**. The NFP courses are offered by trained couples or via online programs. The Wedding Coordinator will provide each couple with the registration information. Once the couple complete the NFP course, a copy of the course will be submitted to the Wedding Coordinator.
Natural Family Planning courses has proven to provide couples with valuable information that can only strengthen marriages.

Planning Process

The Wedding Coordinator will work with you in planning your wedding ceremony. Every wedding ceremony is unique. We wish to work with you to plan out the entire liturgy so that all the component parts come together for a beautiful celebration. Within the initial wedding package, you will find a paper entitled "Your Wedding Celebration". This paper will help you organize all aspects of the wedding liturgy. Please recall that the

majority of our weddings are performed in the context of Sacred Liturgy (the Mass), therefore, we strongly encourage our couples to attend Sunday Mass regularly together and faithfully. Furthermore, please frequent the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession as often as possible, but in particular a few days before the wedding ceremony. The faithful reception of these sacraments will deepen your spiritual lives and enhance the quality of your wedding liturgy. In this planning stage, please be sure to review the readings suitable for weddings which will be provided to you by your Wedding Coordinator. Please be certain that individuals who are good readers, are indeed selected to read at your wedding ceremony. We will work with you while incorporating various Roman Catholic cultural customs. Please realize that only those that truly have special meaning and familial significance should be considered by the couple entering marriage; often times less is best.

How to obtain a civil marriage license in the State of Florida

Please go together and obtain the civil marriage license from any County Courthouse in the State of Florida. We highly recommend that you go together to the civil marriage license bureau located at 100 North Pine Island Road, Plantation, FL 33324, Room 180, or call at 954-831-6521, or to the Central Court House located at 540 SE 3rd Avenue, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301, Room 02460, or call at 954-831-7283. There is no need to have a prior civil marriage. Once you have obtained the civil marriage license, please be sure to bring it at the time of your Wedding rehearsal. When you apply for a civil marriage license you will need to take your Social Security Card and your Driver's License, as well as the original certificate of either El Camino or Transformed in Love pre-marriage retreat. In some cases, it is necessary to take additional identification, such as passport, or any other valid form of identification. If you have a prior marriage, please be sure to take proof of the divorce decree.

You will need to purchase the civil marriage license within 30 days before the wedding date. Please be sure to check this out with the civil marriage license authorities. Wedding cannot take place without this **license from the State of Florida**, equally Catholic priests/deacons cannot perform weddings without the proper State of Florida civil marriage license. **Please recall that you will NOT get married civilly at the Marriage License Bureau.** The celebrant priest or deacon along with two witnesses will execute the final signing of the civil license which occurs at the end of the church wedding ceremony. Important: The bride and groom will sign before the Deputy Clerk at the Marriage License Bureau.

Wedding dress code for the bride and bridesmaids

We wish our brides and their bridesmaids to exercise great care and prudence in selecting their wedding dress. Please recall that you are entering the Sacrament of Matrimony before Almighty God, the priest or deacon, your family and friends. Select dresses that are dignified and beautiful.

We are in the Holy Presence of God

Saint Gregory the Great Catholic Church strives that all wedding liturgies provide a holy, spiritual, and personal experience for the bride, groom, and guests. We wish for them to feel welcome and longing to return again to worship with us. To create this atmosphere and to maintain a sense of respect for the Eucharist, we show a sense of reverence, silence, and proper decorum within the church.

We ask that your groomsmen serve as ushers in **escorting** your guests once they have entered the church. Likewise, they can assist your guests as they exit the church at the end of your wedding ceremony.

Flower Girl and Ring Bearer

We kindly request that if you decide to have a Flower Girl and/or Ring Bearer you exercise great caution in selecting these little ones. We ask that the two children selected be five years or older, and behave accordingly in church.

The Wedding Procession

The bridal court will consist of the following; maid of honor, best man, six (6) bridesmaids, and six (6) groomsmen. You may very well decide to have less, or simply consider not having a bridal court at all. Additionally, you may ask the bride's mother and groom's mother to enter prior to the bridal court's procession or other significant member of your family.

Church Decorations

The church building is very beautiful and truly requires no further decorations. However, you may wish to place simple flower arrangements on the sanctuary. Flowers may not be utilized during the sacred holy season of Lent. However, the bride and her bridal court may carry flowers while entering and exiting the church, as well as the groomsmen wear boutonnieres. The Groom's and Bride's mothers may also wear corsages.

Who may officiate or preside at the wedding liturgy?

Generally, one of our parish priests or deacons will preside at your wedding ceremony. One will be assigned to your wedding; thus, you will have time to meet before the wedding date. If you wish to have a family member or personal friend who is a Roman Catholic priest or deacon, please contact the priest and he will guide you, and most importantly the presider/celebrant in obtaining proper canonical delegation from the Pastor at Saint Gregory the Great Catholic Church, Rev. Michael W. Davis.

The priest or deacon to whom the delegation is granted must observe every guideline and all liturgical rubrics established by the Roman Catholic Church. If the presider/ celebrant has any questions, please direct him to the priest assigned to you.

Photography and/or Videography during the wedding ceremony

We ask all couples getting married at our parish to choose from our approved photographers. These individuals have been chosen not only for their professionalism but also because of their understanding of the Catholic Liturgy. If you would like someone not on this list, the parish must ok the photographer two months prior to the wedding day. It is truly imperative that these guidelines are abided and respected; hence we can easily guarantee that your wedding ceremony will indeed be a celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony.

Approved Photographers:

Maria Claridge
Maria@mariaclaridge.com
www.mariaclaridge.com
954-682-0446

Adaliz Desantis
Hello@adalizdesantis.com
www.adalizdesantis.com
954-249-3110

Marcy Venegas
weddingsbymarcy@aol.com
www.marcyvenegasphotography.com

Tess Ann Photography
tess@tessannphotography.com
www.tessannphotography.com
561-929-1045

Wedding Music

All couples getting married at Saint Gregory the Great Catholic Church must schedule a Music Planning Session with our Director of Music, Mr. Michael Sayers. During this meeting you will be walked through the entire ceremony, and you will have the opportunity to listen to several musical selections and discuss the musical options for your special day. This meeting must occur at least 2 months prior to your wedding date.

To schedule your one-on-one Music Planning Session, or to answer any questions regarding wedding music, please contact Mr. Michael Sayers via email at msayers@saintgreg.org or by phone at 954-473-8169 ext. 1017.

The Kiss

Our couples are encouraged to kiss. We simply remind them to utilize church etiquette, thus we remind ourselves in Whose Presence we are celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony in the Catholic Church.

Rice, bubbles, bird seed, confetti, flower petals, and the like

For the safety of your guests and the cleanliness of the church and grounds, we do not allow the use of rice, bird seeds, confetti, bubbles, flower petals, and/or anything else that might be potential hazards for your guests. Additionally, we ask that Limousine Company review our Responsibility Agreement with regard to your first toast and the bottle cork.

Rest before Wedding Day

We wish to celebrate every wedding ceremony in a very spiritual way so that your family and guests will always recall how uniquely blessed they felt during your wedding ceremony. Therefore, we invite all involved in the wedding party to rest well the day before the ceremony. Accordingly, enjoy the wedding ceremony and the reception in their proper manner.

Arrive on time on your wedding day

Our weddings are well planned, well-rehearsed, and scheduled with sufficient time; therefore, the wedding party, parents, bride and invited guests must arrive on time for the wedding ceremony. All wedding ceremonies begin and end with ample time. Please realize that we may very well have multiple sacramental celebrations in church on a given day. Important: Every wedding ceremony is assigned one hour and 15 minutes; this includes, the wedding ceremony itself followed by the photo session.

Signing of documents after the ceremony

Immediately after the ceremony, two witnesses will be asked to sign the church marriage certificate and/or the civil marriage license. The priest or deacon will sign the marriage license as well on the altar.

Wedding Rehearsals

Wedding rehearsals are assigned on either the Thursday or Friday before the wedding date. Please contact the Wedding Coordinator and make the appropriate arrangements.

How do our parents fit into our parish wedding preparations?

From the very beginning and throughout your entire wedding preparation, we communicate only with the bride and groom. While we acknowledge, understand, comprehend, support their interest in the marriage ceremony of their son or daughter, should parents (or any other relative or friend) contact us regarding your marriage plans, we shall immediately thank them for their interest and refer them back to you, the couple. The bride and the groom together are the only persons who communicate decisions to us. Further, many couples do not appreciate their future-in-laws phoning the Pastor (or Wedding Coordinator) and trying to influence or change the decisions that they have already made and communicated to the parish priest and staff. Kindly, explain, from the beginning, that you alone will organize your wedding day and future marriage.

Wedding Fees

Itemized schedule of fees for weddings at Church of Saint Gregory the Great

"Parishioners"
(Must be registered and be active contributing members for two (2) years) There is a $500.00 non-refundable booking deposit, which will secure your booking and is a part of the Total Price.

Sacrament of Matrimony	$0.00
Organist	$300.00
Cantor	$200.00
Marriage Preparation Materials	$30.00
Wedding Coordination	$200.00
Paper Work, A/C, Church supplies	$270.00
Stewardship	$200.00
Total	**$1,200.00**

"Non Parishioners"
There is a $500.00 non-refundable booking deposit, which will secure your booking and is a part of the Total Price.

Sacrament of Matrimony	$0.00
Organist	$300.00
Cantor	$200.00
Marriage Preparation	$30.00
Wedding Coordination	$200.00
Paper Work, A/C, Church supplies	$270.00
Non-Parishioner Stewardship	$950.00
Total	**$1,950.00**

"Paperwork Only"

Administrative Fee	$200.00
Books & Materials	$100.00
Transfer fee	$ 80.00
Total	**$380.00**

Final Thoughts

Our written parish wedding guidelines are offered as a means of assisting every couple in planning and celebrating a beautiful wedding ceremony. Naturally, our wedding guidelines cannot cover every possible question or situation that arises in preparing any ceremony.

These wedding guidelines are in no way a legal document and can be changed by the Pastor at any time without prior notice. Our guidelines are an on-going response to changing liturgical needs and customs of our parishioners. Any special concerns or questions can always be discussed with the Priest or the Wedding Coordinator.

Questions and concerns are ONLY brought to our attention by either the bride or groom as we strive to maintain our couples as our primary goal. Therefore, if anyone other than the bride or groom should call or visit our offices regarding any wedding issue, we will ONLY address these with either the bride or groom. Ultimately, the Pastor has the final decisions in all matters. Again, we welcome you to our parish and look forward to celebrating with you the special joy of your wedding day.

St. Gregory the Great
Catholic Church and School

Saint Gregory Catholic Church

200 N. University Drive, Plantation, FL 33324

Church Phone: 954-473-6261

Church email: rectory@saintgreg.org

Wedding Coordinator: weddingcoordinator@saintgreg.org