



Planning your wedding day

Guidelines and information to help you,
as you prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage



Marriage Ministries
Supporting couples and priests
in the
Archdiocese of Wellington

Congratulations!

Congratulations to you both as you set out on this wonderful journey and commitment together. Your journey towards marriage began the day you first met.

The Archdiocese of Wellington, Marriage Ministries team are committed and ready to help you with your preparations for your marriage.

As you make plans for your wedding day, there will be a number of things to check off your list. Please allow **at least 6 months** to complete the Catholic marriage preparation requirements outlined in this booklet.



May your love for each other reflect the enduring love of Christ for his Church. As you face the future together, keep in mind that the sacrament of marriage unites you with Christ, and brings you, through the years, the grace and blessing of God our Father.

Getting married in the Catholic Church

What you need to know...

- The first thing a couple need to do is to contact your local parish priest where you live. It's a good idea to ring the local parish office and make an appointment to see your local parish priest.
- You must book the Church where you wish to marry. Some churches require this booking one year in advance of your wedding date, others may not need as much time, however it is important to check with your officiating priest before you set the date for your wedding. Some churches require you to sign an agreement and pay a deposit.
- You must ensure you have a priest who has agreed to officiate your wedding.
- **The Catholic Pre-nuptial enquiry forms** for each person marrying must be completed by the couple with the priest present to guide you.
 - A Baptismal certificate for the purposes of marriage. This is to be issued from the place of baptism within 6 months of the proposed marriage date.
 - A copy of confirmation details (separate certificate if not recorded on baptismal certificate.
 - Proof of Freedom to Marry
 - This may be in the form of a letter from the parishes in which you have lived in.
 - A letter from a parent or someone who knows you well, stating that you have never been married civilly or religiously before.

- Sworn affidavit stating you have never married.
- It is important to check with your officiating priest regarding what form of proof of freedom to Marry to provide as each situation is different and practices for this vary from place to place.
- If you are marrying a non-Catholic, your priest will understand that coming to see him may make this a nervous time for you both. Your priest understands this and will try to make this process as friendly and stress free as possible. He will ask you as the Catholic party to sign a form for Mixed marriage in the Church. It is a simple process.
- Marriage Preparation Certificate or proof of pre-marriage counselling.
- Permissions and Dispensations where applicable need to be applied for, these are outlined in the pre-nuptial enquiry papers, however if either party has been previously married, it is essential that freedom to marry be established before any marriage arrangements can be confirmed. For further information contact:
 - Msgr Gerard Burns, Vicar-General, Archdiocese of Wellington, Catholic Centre, 22-30 Hill Street, PO Box 1937, Wellington 6140, or Tel: 04 496 1737
Email: g.burns@wn.catholic.org.nz
 - Louise Kelleher or Teena George, Tribunal of the Catholic Church of NZ, Catholic Centre, 22-30 Hill Street, PO Box 1937, Wellington 6140, Tel 04 496 1727
Email: tribunal.wellington@catholic-tribunal.org.nz

Arranging for a Dossier Transfer of your pre-nuptial enquiry papers to another country for your marriage.

- All Catholic marriages require Catholic pre-nuptial papers to be completed with a priest. Whether you are getting married in New Zealand or overseas, it is essential that you contact your parish priest as soon as possible to arrange an appointment to complete the marriage papers.
- Marriage papers are required for all weddings, both in and outside the church building. It is especially important if your marriage is taking place overseas or in another diocese in New Zealand.
- Your marriage papers are prepared in the place where you currently reside.
- If your wedding is to be held outside the church, or in another New Zealand Diocese or overseas, the papers are forwarded by your priest to the Vicar General, Monsignor Gerard Burns in the Wellington Archdiocese. He will then provide any further documentation required.
- The marriage papers are then sent to the Bishop's representative (Vicar General or Vicar for Marriages) in the Diocese (Chancery office) where you are being married. They are then forwarded to the priest who will officiate at your wedding. Please allow at least 6 months for this process.
- The documentation outlined in first section of this brochure will be required and included in your full dossier transfer.
- It is usual practice to post the documents overseas, however if you wish to have these papers couriered and tracked, the cost of this service will be on-charged to yourselves, following the delivery of the papers.

Marriage preparation programmes:

Congratulations! The Catholic Church congratulates you on your decision to marry. Our aim is to support you in making your marriage the best possible. The marriage preparation courses run in the Archdiocese of Wellington are designed to give you and your partner time to discuss and reflect upon important topics.

Your Marriage preparation course offers both of you the opportunity to reflect on how you communicate, to explore your understanding of commitment, how to manage conflict when it arises, how to be responsible parents if you are blessed with children and how to live the sacrament of marriage.

During the Marriage preparation course we invite you to:
Spend quality time together reflecting on your relationship and your future.

Relax and enjoy an atmosphere that is respectful, confidential and welcoming to those of all faiths and beliefs.

Please be assured that at no time during the preparation process will any couple or individual be placed in a situation that will cause embarrassment or distress.

Marriage preparation courses in the Archdiocese of Wellington during the Covid-19 pandemic:

During the pandemic we are offering couples three pathways to choose from in order to complete Catholic Marriage Preparation.

Details of the current marriage preparation courses currently offered are outlined in the 'Getting married' brochure available from the Marriage ministries office or details of the courses are available online via the link below:

<https://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/church-mission/marriage-ministries/>

If you have questions and would like to talk about which Marriage Preparation pathway in the Archdiocese of Wellington is right for you, please do not hesitate to contact: Felicity Giltrap, Consultant, Marriage Ministries, marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz 04 496 1719

Marriage preparation courses run in the Archdiocese from 1 February to 30 November each year.

Civil requirements in New Zealand

- Get a marriage licence: Before you get married, you need to apply for a marriage licence. This confirms it's legal for you to marry. A marriage license costs \$150.
- What you need to know: You need to arrange your licence at least 3 working days before you get married.
- It expires after 3 months.
- Your priest will officiate your marriage and is 'the celebrant'. Priests in New Zealand are registered celebrants with the department of Internal affairs. To check if your priest is registered, please ask them if you are unsure. The Vicar General will be able to help with this if any further information is needed.
- Only one of you needs to complete the application, but you need correct information about both of you.
- Apply online
- Anyone can apply online, whether you're in New Zealand or not.

More information on how to apply for a civil marriage licence is at the link below:

<https://www.govt.nz/browse/family-and-whanau/getting-married/get-a-marriage-licence/>

Civil requirements for overseas weddings:

- Certificate of no impediment (CONI)

Some countries will ask you for a document that proves you're not already married in New Zealand. In New Zealand, this document is called a 'Certificate of no impediment to marriage' other countries might call it something different. The Department of Internal Affairs can help you with this.

Your ceremony

Your ceremony is the most important aspect of your wedding as it is here that you declare your love and commitment to each other for the rest of your lives in the sight of your family, friends and God. Marriage is a life long commitment and the time you take to prepare your marriage ceremony will bring you lasting memories of a wonderful day.

It is always important to plan your wedding ceremony in conjunction with the priest who is officiating and celebrating your wedding.

It is also important to choose readings, hymns and prayers that are meaningful to both of you.

Including family members in your liturgy from both sides of the family is important as you are now become one family.

For more information about planning your wedding ceremony please talk to your priest. The following links may help with your planning.

<http://www.catholicweddinghelp.com/topics/order-wedding-with-mass.htm>

<http://www.catholicweddinghelp.com/topics/order-wedding-outside-mass.htm>

<https://togetherforlifeonline.com/catholic-wedding-ceremony/>
(NB: This book is used in the USA and may differ to current NZ customary practices.) Please check with your priest about your particular circumstances and wedding ceremony planning.



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