

MARRIAGE@WN.CATHOLIC.ORG.NZ

# PLANNING YOUR WEDDING *day*



Guidelines and information for engaged couples,  
as they prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of  
Marriage in Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas.



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# Kia ora!

Welcome to this guide on planning your Catholic wedding day in New Zealand or overseas.

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 guide.

Every wedding is unique, and your situation will differ from that of other couples, making this guide not a one-size-fits-all solution. There may be things that crop up in the planning of your wedding ceremony that you'll want to discuss. Your Officiating Priest, Marriage Celebrant, Parish Secretary and Archdiocesan Marriage Ministry Staff are all there to help you.

For more information, please welcome to contact:

**Mely Lau**

Marriage Ministry - Church Mission Team  
Archdiocese of Wellington

**[marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz)**

**(04) 496 1719**

**Website:**

**[www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/church-mission/marriage-ministries/](http://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/church-mission/marriage-ministries/)**

**Facebook:**

**[www.facebook.com/marriageadw](http://www.facebook.com/marriageadw)**

# Getting married in the Catholic Church

## What you need to know...

- The first thing a couple needs to do is to contact the local Priest or Parish Priest or Parish Office where you live and make an appointment to see your local Priest/Parish Priest/Marriage Celebrant.
- You must ensure you have a Priest/Marriage Celebrant who has agreed to officiate your wedding.
- You must book the Church where you wish to marry. Some churches require this booking one year in advance of your wedding date. It is important to check with your Priest/Marriage Celebrant before you set the date for your wedding as some churches require you to sign an agreement and pay a deposit.
- The Catholic Pre-Nuptial Enquiry Forms for each person marrying are to be completed by the couple with a Priest/Marriage Celebrant present to guide you. You will need to provide:
  - A Baptismal Certificate for marriage purposes. This is to be issued from the place of baptism within 6 months of the proposed marriage date.
  - Confirmation details, if not recorded alongside baptismal details (a separate certificate or copy).
- If you are marrying a non-Catholic, your Priest/Marriage Celebrant will ask you, as the Catholic party, to sign a specific form. It is a simple process. Any necessary permissions and dispensations will be handled accordingly. Your Priest/Marriage Celebrant understands that you may have questions and aims to make this process as friendly and stress-free as possible.
- Enrol in a Marriage Preparation Course (see Section 3 of this booklet).



## SECTION 2

# Arranging for a Dossier Transfer of your Pre-Nuptial Enquiry papers to another country for your marriage

- Whether you are planning to get married in New Zealand or overseas, it is essential to reach out to your Priest as soon as possible to arrange an appointment to complete the Pre-Nuptial marriage documents.
- Your marriage documents should be prepared in the location where you currently reside.
- The completed marriage documents will be sent by your Priest to the Vicar General, Monsignor Gerard Burns, in the Archdiocese of Wellington. The Vicar General will then provide any further documentation required and send overseas to the Bishop's representative (either the Vicar General or Vicar for Marriages) in the Diocese's Chancery Office where your wedding is scheduled to take place.
- Once received, these documents will be forwarded to the Priest/Marriage Celebrant who will be officiating your wedding ceremony.

**Please allow at least 6 months for this entire process.**

- The shipping cost of this service will be on-charged to the couple after the documents have been delivered.



# Marriage Preparation Programmes

Our aim is to support you in making your marriage the best possible.

Couples are offered to choose one option from three marriage preparation pathways which are mentioned below.



ENROL NOW

## **Option 1: Love is a Decision (LIAD) & COMMIT programmes**

The programmes are designed to be completed together and take place in person in Wellington. LIAD is a group course over two consecutive Sundays from 10am to 4pm, while COMMIT can be scheduled with a Marriage Educator at your convenience. The cost for this option is \$130.00 per couple.

## **Option 2: Smart Loving (9-week Online, Self-Directed course)**

This course is suited to couples who are self-isolating or one party is currently residing in another country. Together as a couple, work through the course on your own. The cost is AUD129.00/USD90.00 includes PDF (self-print) workbooks.

## **Option 3: Engaged Encounter weekend**

The weekend “away from it all” gives couples an unparalleled opportunity to form a closer bond to each other and create a solid foundation for a happy future. It takes place in Karori and runs from Saturday 8am to Sunday 4pm. The cost for this experience is \$180.00 per couple.

Further details and registration are available via the link below:

[www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/church-mission/marriage-ministries/](http://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/church-mission/marriage-ministries/)

or contact: Mely Lau at [marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz)

# Civil requirements in New Zealand

## GETTING 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 licence costs \$150.

- You need to arrange your licence at least 3 working days before you get married.
- It expires after 3 months.
- Your Priest/Marriage Celebrant will officiate your marriage and is 'the celebrant'. Priests/Marriage Celebrants in New Zealand are registered celebrants with the Department of Internal Affairs. To check if your Priest/Marriage Celebrant 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 need to complete the application, but they need all the correct information about the both of you.
- Apply online.

More information on how to apply for a civil marriage is at this link:

[www.govt.nz/browse/family-and-whanau/getting-married/get-a-marriage-licence/](http://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 are 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/Marriage Celebrant 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 to become one family.

For more information about planning your wedding ceremony, please talk to your officiating Priest/Marriage Celebrant. The following links may help with your planning.

[www.catholicweddinghelp.com/topics/order-wedding-with-mass.htm](http://www.catholicweddinghelp.com/topics/order-wedding-with-mass.htm)

[www.catholicweddinghelp.com/topics/order-wedding-outside-mass.htm](http://www.catholicweddinghelp.com/topics/order-wedding-outside-mass.htm)

[www.togetherforlifeonline.com/catholic-wedding-ceremony/](http://www.togetherforlifeonline.com/catholic-wedding-ceremony/) (this book is used in the USA and may differ to current NZ customary practices. Please check with your Priest/Marriage Celebrant about your particular circumstances and wedding ceremony planning).







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.

(Blessings for Couples)