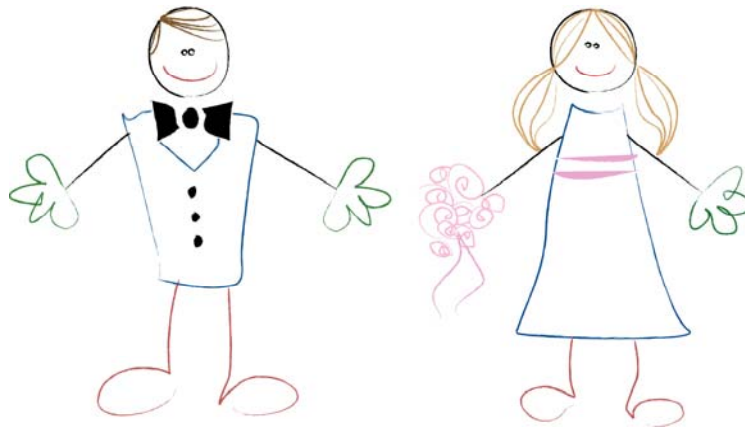


'all the days of our lives'



To Assist You Plan Your Wedding
In Saint John's Parish
Kilkenny

A Prayer for An Engaged Couple

Thank you, Lord, for bringing us together
and for the gift of our love
which has already brought us so much joy.
Grant that we may always continue
to love each other
with reverence, patience and generosity.

In the hurried days of the final preparations,
grant us the calmness to reflect on the moment
when you will seal and sanctify our promises,
binding us together in your love forever.

In joy or sorrow, in richness or poverty,
in sickness and in health,
may our love grow all the days of our lives. Amen

Congratulations!



Congratulations on your decision to get married.
It's one of the most important decisions of your whole life.
Your desire to marry in Church is your invitation to Christ to be at the heart of your relationship.
The Christian community wishes you every blessing and happiness.

You are welcome to have your marriage celebrated in St John's Church (*Church of St John The Evangelist*), Dunmore Church (*Church of The Most Holy Trinity*) or in Johnswell Church (*Church of St John The Baptist*).

We hope that this guide will be of assistance to you in your preparation for your wedding day. Although it may not cover all issues that can arise in some proposed marriages, it has been compiled as a general aid to help you prepare for your wedding in our parish.

The Parish Office will be happy to answer any queries you may have.
T. 056-772 1072; E. stjohns@ossory.ie

Fixing The Date

When you have chosen a date and found a hotel/restaurant that can accommodate you on that date, do not offer any deposit until you have also checked that the church in which you would like your wedding to be celebrated is also available.

In deference to our own parishioners, we do not accept bookings in excess of twelve months before the proposed wedding from couples when neither party is from St John's parish.



What Kind Of Service?

There are two kinds of Marriage Service – both of which are entirely reasonable choices. One is where the Marriage Sacrament takes place during Mass. The other is where the Marriage Sacrament takes place without the Mass (with Readings from Scripture, Marriage Vows, Prayers of Intercession, Blessings, etc).

The choice of service should be made in the light of the personal faith circumstances of bride and groom. Most Catholics will choose to have their marriage within a Nuptial Mass.

However, where one of the parties is not Roman Catholic or a non-believer, the marriage ceremony without the Mass may be more appropriate.

It is important to talk this decision over with your families and with the priest who will officiate.

During the days before the marriage, it is recommended that couples prepare spiritually by celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Church Requirements - Pre Marriage Papers

Every couple marrying in the Catholic Church is required to give a minimum of three months notice to their priest, (i.e., the Bride to her priest and the Groom to his priest).

Many couples think the only document they need is what's called "*A Letter of Freedom*" – this is not so!

The following documents are required:

The Bride



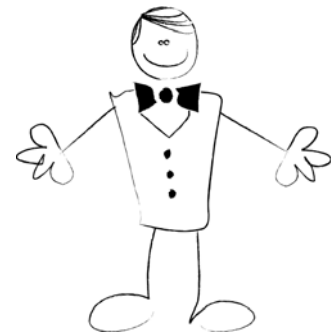
1. A *Baptismal Certificate*, from the church where you were baptised, issued within six months of the date of the wedding.
2. A *Confirmation Certificate* from the parish where you were confirmed.
3. If you have lived in any parish, other than your current one, for six months or more since you reached the age of 18, you will need to get a *Letter of Freedom* from these parishes also.
4. A certificate of completion of a recognised *Pre-Marriage Course*.

Give these documents to the priest of your parish and fill out the Prenuptial Enquiry Form with him.

The Groom

1. A *Baptismal Certificate*, from the church where you were baptised, issued within six months of the date of the wedding.
2. A *Confirmation Certificate* from the parish where you were confirmed.
3. If you have lived in any parish, other than your current one, for six months or more, since you reached the age of 18, you will need to get a *Letter of Freedom* from these parishes also.

You then give these documents to the priest of your current parish and he will fill out the *Pre-nuptial Enquiry Form* with you.

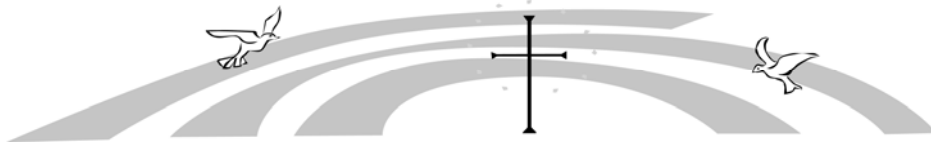


When complete, he will send all documents to the priest of your fiancé's parish.

Couples Living Abroad

In the case of couples living abroad, the priest in the parish of your residence will complete your *Pre-nuptial Enquiry Form* and will forward it to the local bishop who in turn will send it to the bishop's office here in Kilkenny.

Address: *Diocesan Office, Sion Road, Kilkenny.*



Inter Church or Inter Faith Marriages

When a Catholic wishes to marry a Christian of another denomination, or a person of another faith, or none, he/she must ask for a *Dispensation* from his/her local bishop. Your priest can facilitate this process.

State Requirements

Meet a *Civil Registrar* at least three months before the wedding to give notice of your intention to marry.

Make an appointment by calling or writing beforehand.

You may notify any of the many Civil Registration Offices in the state.

The address of the Kilkenny office is:

Civil Registration Office

County Clinic

James Street

Kilkenny

T. 056-778 4600

You must take the following documents to the Registrar:

- Photo Identity, e.g. original passports (both parties), plus photocopies of same.
- Utility bill for both parties, plus photocopies of same (as proof of address).
- Names and dates of birth of both witnesses.
- Name of the church in which you will marry.
- Name of the priest (the '*solemniser*') who will officiate.
- PPS Number (both parties).
- The prescribed Fee (€150 in 2009).
-

Please note: If the priest (*solemniser*) who is to officiate at your wedding is a visiting priest from outside the Republic of Ireland, make sure he is a Registered Solemniser in the Republic, otherwise he may not be able to celebrate the ceremony.

If in doubt, consult your local priest, or visit www.gro.ie (General Register's Office) which contains lots of useful information and the list of registered solemnisers.

When all the civil requirements have been completed satisfactorily, you will receive a *Marriage Registration Form* (MRF) from the registrar.

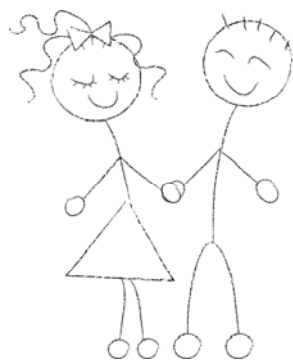
It is essential to remember that without presenting this form before your wedding to the priest (solemniser), he is not legally permitted to perform the ceremony and the wedding will not take place.

You are also required to make a verbal declaration of ***No Civil Impediment*** not more than two days beforehand. It is recommended practice that this declaration is made at the beginning of the wedding, when the bride and groom arrive at the sanctuary. If you are preparing a Marriage Booklet you might include the declaration at the beginning of the ceremony. The officiating priest (*solemniser*) will put the following question to the bride and groom in turn:

Do you declare that you do not know of any civil impediment to the marriage you are about to enter with _____ ?

After the ceremony, it is the couple's responsibility to return the signed Marriage Registration Form (MRF) to the Civil Registrar's Office within one month of the date of the wedding.

Pre - Marriage Courses



Marriage is for life.

If you're going into something which you want to last for life, a time of reflection and preparation is time well spent.

This is why you are required to take part in a *Pre-marriage Course*. As there are so many seeking places on these courses, it is necessary to book six to nine months in advance.

Here in Kilkenny, pre-marriage courses are provided by ACCORD.

Their office is located St Mary's Centre, James Street, Kilkenny.

T: 056-772 2674; E: accord@ossory.ie

Details of all the ACCORD centres in the country, and the courses they offer, can be found at www.accord.ie

Parking

We have limited parking facilities at St John's church. Forty five to fifty cars is the maximum we can accommodate.

Please inform your guests of this, and that there are also 1,100 parking spaces MacDonagh Junction Shopping Centre, across from the church.

Under no circumstances do we permit parking on the church lawns!



At Dunmore and Johnswell churches there is usually ample parking. However, please be aware that you might need to provide a parking assistant at Dunmore if you have a large number of guests. The traffic on the road beside the church can be very fast, and extreme caution should be exercised on entering and exiting this car-park.

Punctuality



Brides, please be on time for your wedding!

There is no 'commandment' at weddings saying 'thou shalt not be punctual'.

Being late is discourteous to your groom, your families, your guests and to church personnel.

Be aware that if you arrive at the church on time, you will be actually ten minutes late arriving at the altar. This is because you may have to pose for some photographs; organise your entourage for the entrance procession, etc.

The Wedding Mass

The priest celebrating your Wedding Mass will help you choose readings, prayers and The Rite of Marriage.



It is good to involve others in the ceremony, e.g., readings, prayers, etc.

Flowers – Candles – Confetti

(Please give a photocopy of this section to your florist)



Flowers are used for their beauty and the promise of abundant life. They should be tastefully arranged and not obscure the Altar or the Ambo.

In general, flowers should only be arranged on the morning of the wedding, after the 10.30 a.m. mass. The reason for this is that flower arrangements can get disturbed at earlier masses or may be inappropriate if, for example, a funeral service takes place beforehand.

- Flowers or ribbons may be attached to the seats as 'pew-ends', but not by using thumb tacks, staples, cellotape or bluetack. Pew-ends should be removed and taken away immediately after the ceremony as the church is usually prepared for baptisms or evening mass.
- Flowers on the altars are usually left in place as a gift to the church. This is expected especially if flowers were disposed of to make room for floral arrangements for your wedding.
- To conform with Health & Safety Regulations, the use of candles in the main body of the church is not allowed.
- The use of confetti in the church or in the church grounds is strictly prohibited.

Music

The music you choose for your wedding ceremony should be in keeping with the sacred character of the occasion.

It is the responsibility of the couple to provide their own musicians, etc.

Where at all possible, hymns that the congregation (your guests) can join in are recommended.

Non-Sacred songs (e.g. your favourite love songs) should not be used during the religious ceremony.

Such favourite songs could be used during the signing of the *Marriage Registration Form* after the wedding, or at the reception.

“In recent years certain types of love songs have been creeping in to weddings which, though perfectly suitable for the reception afterwards, are not suitable in the Church”. (*Christian Marriage – Preparation and Celebration*. The Irish Episcopal Conference).



PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY



(Please give a photocopy of this section to your photographer and videographer.)

We are very fortunate in St John's to have beautifully maintained churches and grounds. They provide an excellent backdrop for photography of your wedding day.

- In order to maintain a sense of the sacred, and yet facilitate the work of a photographer or videographer, we ask that you advise them to take the following guidelines into consideration:
- The taking of photographs and video recording should be unobtrusive; it should not be distracting to you, the congregation or to the priest.
- It is requested of photographers/videographers never to come between the couple and the celebrant. They should observe the basic "*line of sight*" rule throughout the ceremony.
- As referred to already, and in keeping with our request for punctuality, we ask the bride to be aware that the taking of photographs at the front door of the church takes time. Please take this into consideration in your efforts to be at the altar on time.
- Photographers/videographers should not move church furnishings, such as *Sacred Spaces, Pews, Paschal Candle*, etc. To know this beforehand gives them the opportunity to make the necessary alternate arrangements (e.g. for the lighting of the marriage candle).

- The only area that photographers/videographers are asked to refrain from using is the Sanctuary area. For example, in St John's Church, they may use the platform on the first step, but may not use the three steps that rise to the Altar level.
- At no time during the ceremony should the photographer /videographer cross behind the Altar.
- As well as using the church grounds, photographers/videographers are welcome to use the centre and side aisles, and the organ loft for their work.
- Keep these guidelines in mind when arranging the format of your ceremony.

Signing The Marriage Registration Form

The register to be signed is the civil register and is not part of the Church ceremony.

For that reason we recommend that it be signed after the church ceremony has ended.

Please remember that the signed *Marriage Registration Form* (MRF) will be handed to you after the ceremony and it is your responsibility to forward this to the *Registrar of Marriages* within one month of the wedding day.



Drinks Reception At Church . . ?



Some Hotels, Wedding Planners and Courtesy-Car companies promote the practice of providing champagne or cocktails for the wedding party as they exit the church after the ceremony.

Such hospitality is more suited and appropriate to the hotel of the reception and is not permitted in our church grounds.

All relevant agencies should be informed of this guideline.

MARRIAGES ABROAD

Couples should make contact with a priest from their parish before making any arrangements for their wedding abroad. This should be done at least six months prior to the intended date for the wedding.

Weddings in Rome for Irish couples (both bearing Irish Passports) are usually straightforward to arrange. They normally take place at *The Pontifical Irish College*, +39 06 7726 31 (www.irishcollege.org); or with the *Irish Pallottine Fathers*, +39 06 69771 21; or with the *Irish Augustinian Friars*, +39 06 42031 21.

Weddings can be booked by contacting any of the above named communities.

They will forward you practical information on getting married in Rome. The paperwork is completed in the usual manner and forwarded by the bride's local priest to the local bishop's office. The bishop will issue a *Certificate of No Impediment*, also known as *Nulla Osta*, and in turn will forward the papers to Rome.

However, take note of the civil requirement of the Italian State Authorities who insist that you apply to the Consular Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin for a civil *Nulla Osta* certificate. The application forms for this certificate should be completed and returned to the Department of Foreign Affairs at least ten weeks before the marriage date in Rome, allowing time for the Department to process the application and forward the Certificate through the Irish Embassy to the church in Rome.

Marriages taking place outside of Ireland, other than in Rome, are subject to strict stipulation by most dioceses. The couple should first contact their local priest.

As you make plans for the happiest day of your life, remember this is a day that should be stress free – a day to be enjoyed. Therefore, any time spent in the planning of this day is time well spent. So, with the choices you make and the options you take, may we wish you a truly memorable and perfect day.

OFFERINGS AND GRATUITIES

Every effort is made to have all our churches in perfect condition for all Sacraments. This involves not just the ongoing general upkeep and maintenance of our church buildings, but it also involves heating and lighting, as well as insurance cover for all parishioners, visitors and guests.

- It is customary to make an offering to the parish in appreciation of and to defray the cost of the facilities provided.
- If you are not a regular contributor to the parish collections you are encouraged to make a generous donation.
- It is also customary to give a donation to those who helped during the whole process:
 - I. If one of the parties is from the parish, there is no set fee for the church. It is however customary to give a voluntary offering to the priest who helps you with the marriage arrangements, deals with the paperwork etc.
 - II. For couples not from the parish a fee is charged to cover expenses. As this fee may change from time to time, please consult the Parish Office regarding fees for non-parishioners.
 - III. It is also customary to give an offering to the priest (*solemniser*) conducting the ceremony.

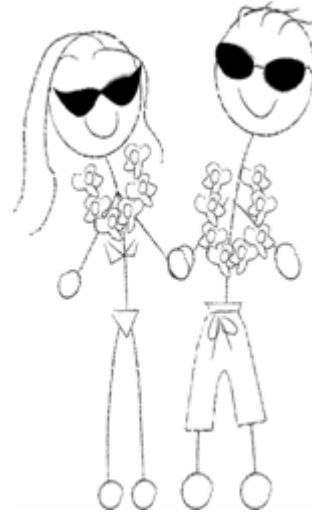


- IV. For attendance at the wedding rehearsal, and for the set-up and take-down on the wedding day, the Sacristan should be suitably remunerated with an appropriate offering.



Finally, may we wish you both a well deserved holiday/honeymoon after all these hectic preparations for what we know will be a fantastic Wedding Day.

We also wish you God's blessing and joy for what we trust will be a very long and happy married life together.



(St John's Parish, 2009)