

## Wedding Information

I appreciate being asked to assist you in preparing for your marriage and at your wedding.

There are some important things that I need to draw to your attention so that we can work together to help make the time of preparation, the wedding ceremony and your life together as husband and wife, the best they can be.

**Marriage in the Catholic Church:** The Catechism of the Catholic Church sums up the teaching of the Church on Marriage and the commitment it entails and then it says that

*It can seem difficult, even impossible, to bind oneself for life to another human being. This makes it all the more important to proclaim the Good News that God loves us with a definitive and irrevocable love, that married couples share in this love, that it supports and sustains them, and that by their own faithfulness they can be witnesses to God's faithful love<sup>1</sup>.*

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People have many reasons for wanting to get married in the Church: Expectations with which they have grown up, their dreams, their faith, the beauty of church weddings, the desire of the Catholic fiancé/e. Jesus affirms God's will for marriage: 'a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.... So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate.' Part of the journey of marriage preparation involves exploring faith and the meaning of marriage within the Catholic Church.

**INITIAL CONSULTATION:** The preparation needs to commence at least six months prior to the wedding. At the initial meeting we can make sure that the church/chapel in which the wedding is to take place is booked and the date and time are mutually acceptable and confirmed. At that time, I will also outline the process we will follow.

**MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSE:** I usually have four to six meetings with you as well as a rehearsal a few days before the wedding. You will need to attend an Archdiocesan approved Marriage Preparation Course and can book this online at <http://www.cmfs.org.au>

Our next meeting will take place after you have done this course so please book it as soon as possible.

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<sup>1</sup> CCC 1648

**DOCUMENTS:** The Marriage Act 1961 sets out the documents required for establishing place and date of birth and identity.

“The following documents only are acceptable as evidence of a party’s date and place of birth:

- an official (original) certificate of birth, or an official extract of an entry in an official register showing the date and place of birth of the party, or
- a statutory declaration from the party or the party’s parent stating: it is impracticable (this does not mean not practical or convenient; it means impossible) to obtain an official birth certificate or extract, and the reasons why, and to the best of the declarant’s knowledge and belief and as accurately as the declarant has been able to ascertain, when and where the party was born, or
- a passport issued by the Australian government or a government of an overseas country showing the date and place of birth of the party.”<sup>2</sup>

You will also need to provide photo documentation to establish your identity. The following are acceptable:

- a driver’s licence
- a proof of age/photo card
- an Australian or overseas passport, or
- a Certificate of Australian Citizenship along with another form of photographic evidence (such as a student card or other photo identification not listed above)<sup>3</sup>.

To complete the church documentation I will need *recent* copies of your **Baptism Certificates and Confirmation Certificates** for Catholic parties. If one of you is a baptised Christian of another denomination, I will need a copy of the **Baptism Certificate**. I will prepare all the legal and Church documents for you and explain them to you before you sign them. I will send the legal documents to the Registrar General’s Office to register your marriage after the ceremony.

**WEDDING CERMONY:** The ceremony can be a Nuptial Mass (50 minutes) or a Wedding Service without Mass (30 minutes). During the time of preparation we will go through the ceremony thoroughly and I will give you the opportunity to choose prayers and scripture readings from the Rite of Marriage; at one of our meetings I shall give you a book, *When We Marry*, which you can use to help you plan your wedding ceremony. Please note that the writing of your own vows is not permitted, nor is the use of readings other than from an approved translation of the Bible. Please be careful in using booklets from other weddings as a guide in preparing your own; a revised Rite of Matrimony was published at the beginning of 2016 and many of the prayers have been modified.

**WEDDING BOOKLET:** I can help you prepare a wedding booklet if you wish to print one. I will be able to save you the bulk of the typing by sending you a copy of the

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<sup>2</sup> *Guidelines on the Marriage Act 1961 for Marriage Celebrants*, 54

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 62

choices you make in a Word Document. You will only need to format it and add the names of the participants as well as prepare a cover page.

**MUSIC:** Music helps to enhance the occasion. MUSIC, HOWEVER, MUST BE EITHER HYMNS OR SACRED MUSIC. Popular songs or secular music are not appropriate in sacred celebrations such as weddings. You may want to choose your own musicians. If you do not know any musicians I may be able to recommend some to you. They will also be able to help you with your choices of music. You may prefer to have recorded music. You need to let me know what you have chosen so that I may ensure that it is appropriate. (Please note, too, that you are responsible for ensuring that you comply with copyright laws).

**PHOTOGRAPHY and VIDEOGRAPHY:** You are most welcome to arrange for photographers/videographers to record the ceremony but they will need to see me before the ceremony begins so that I can set out the ground rules which will prevent their distracting the congregation or you. Please ensure that they know that they have to follow these rules. Some chapels and churches may have their own rules regarding this and these will need to be observed.

**REHEARSAL:** We will arrange a rehearsal a day or so before the ceremony. You will need to arrange a booking with the church/chapel for the rehearsal and to make sure we will have access to the buildings. The rehearsal usually lasts 30 to 45 minutes. The bridal party (including the bride's father if he is giving the bride away) and the groomsmen should attend this rehearsal to practice their parts and receive instructions.

**FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS:** You need to discuss with the church/chapel sacristans what the local policies are with regard to these. However, no arrangements can be placed on top of the altar. The altar is a very sacred place and nothing should detract from it. Decorations must be in harmony with the current liturgical season, e.g. during Lent flowers and other decorations should be kept to a minimum. Seasonal liturgical decorations in the Church sanctuary which have been arranged for Parish worship **may not** be taken down or replaced for a particular wedding. Nothing is to be removed without prior consent of the Parish Priest or Parish Sacristan and must be restored to its original place after the ceremony.

#### **SPECIAL NOTES:**

- Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the Church building and, in some places, in the grounds.
- Food items and beverages/alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the Church or Gathering spaces.

**FEES:** Each church/chapel will have its own fee structure. You need to deal directly with the sacristan/Parish Secretary with regard to the fees. This will be the same for

singers and musicians. There is no set fee for my services. Couples usually make an offering.

**If you have any questions about anything in the letter please ask me at our next meeting.**