

## CELEBRATING CATHOLIC MARRIAGE

Congratulations on your decision to marry. In the tradition of the Catholic Church, the celebration of marriage is an expression in the community of the sacramental covenant between a man and a woman. It is both a human celebration and an action which sanctifies the bride and groom in the eyes of the Church and the Catholic community. Hence marriages within the Catholic tradition must be celebrated in conformity with the norms established by the Church.

In Australia, a marriage ceremony must also satisfy the requirements of the State. **The purpose of this pamphlet is to indicate the Church and State requirements which will assist you in the planning of your wedding and the celebration of your marriage.**

### MARRIAGE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

If you intend to marry in a Catholic Church, you should personally notify a celebrant of the parish in which you wish to marry. This should be done as early as possible and , ideally, at least six months prior to the wedding.

The usual place for a wedding is in your local parish church or a church where you regularly attend. Most celebrants give priority to performing weddings in their own parish. In some circumstances there may be sufficient reason to ask the permission of the bishop for a marriage to take place elsewhere, such as in the church of another tradition.

It is wise to confirm the date and time of your wedding ceremony before making arrangements for the reception.

The celebrant will discuss with you details of your marriage preparation. Because the Church believes that marriage is a sacrament, it encourages adequate and timely preparation, not just for the wedding – but, more importantly, for a life-long commitment. This preparation will generally include:

- ✓ Marriage preparation or education
- ✓ The completion of necessary documentation
- ✓ Preparation of the ceremony

## MARRIAGE PREPARATION

The Church encourages all couples to adequately prepare for marriage and before the wedding to reflect on their commitment to each other. This preparation should be done as long before the wedding as possible – even before engagement when you are thinking seriously of marriage – but at least six months prior to your wedding. The preparation consists of:

- ✓ Undertaking a marriage preparation/education program
- ✓ Spiritual preparation, either in a program or with your celebrant, or both.

Your celebrant will be able to provide you with details of marriage education courses in your area. These courses usually run for a weekend or a series of evenings and are led by individuals and couples trained in marriage education and experienced at working with groups. Usually marriage education programs enable you to work with other couples and to look at topics such as family background, communication skills, dealing with conflict, roles in marriage, expectations of marriage, sexuality, family planning finances and legal issues, and spirituality and religious issues.

Our parish recommends the pre marriage program run by the Archdiocese of Melbourne. For further information and to book please visit [www.ccam.org.au](http://www.ccam.org.au)

## DOCUMENTATION

Various documents need to be completed prior to your wedding. These documents are required by both the Church and the State.

The documents need to be completed prior to your wedding. They are given to the priest who is preparing the wedding papers with you.

The documents should be completed at least one to three months prior to your wedding, and preferably longer.

You need to provide the following certificates or papers:

- ✓ **Birth Certificate (or Extract of Birth)**  
Obtainable from the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages in your Capital City
- ✓ **Baptismal Certificates** Of recent origin (less than six months) obtainable from the parish in which you were baptised. Baptised persons of other Christian denominations should also provide some evidence of their baptism.
- ✓ **Confirmation Certificate, Letter of Freedom and Permission to Marry**  
These documents may also be required by the celebrant. Ask him for details.

✓ **Under 18 years**

Where one or both parties are under 18 the commonwealth requirements now oblige such a person to seek a court order from the local court or family court before they are able to marry.

✓ **Evidence of Death or Annulment**

In the case of a remarriage.

## **COMPLETION OF FORMS**

A number of forms are required by the Church and government authorities. These include:

✓ **Notification of Intended Marriage**

This must be signed at least one month before the wedding

✓ **A Marriage Declaration**

This must be completed by each person

✓ **A Declaration on the Marriage Certificate**

Must also be signed before the ceremony

The celebrant will supply you with these forms, and a government leaflet entitled Marriage and You.

## **INTER-FAITH MARRIAGE**

The Catholic partner in an inter-faith marriage is required to sign a promise in order to seek permission to marry. In doing so, the Catholic partner undertakes to continue to live the Catholic faith and to do all in his or her power to share that faith with their children.

In order to understand the undertaking given by the Catholic partner, some instruction is required, especially of the other than Catholic partner. This is not intended to “pressure” persons other than Catholic into becoming a Catholic, but to help both parties towards a better understanding of marriage within the Catholic tradition.

## **THE WEDDING CEREMONY**

The wedding ceremony is arranged by you in association with the celebrant. You may choose a nuptial Mass or just the wedding ceremony.

Many couples prepare their own wedding booklets. There are many readings, prayers and a great variety of music available for you to choose for your wedding liturgy.

Your celebrant will be able to refer you to wedding liturgy books which you may use to make the occasion memorable for you.

If you wish to practice the ceremony, this can usually be done in the church a day or two before the wedding. You will need to make arrangements with your celebrant. Ring the office to book this. Ph: **8862 4020**.

### **Time**

**It is important that the ceremony commence at the time arranged so that other people and any ceremony to follow will not be inconvenienced.**

### **Witnesses**

The law requires two witnesses over the age of 18 to sign marriage certificates and the register.

### **Charges**

It is customary to offer a stipend to your celebrant to officiate at a wedding. Please discuss this with your priest when you meet with him. If our Parish Priest is officiating at your wedding please refer to your booking email in regards to his fee. The parish will require a payment for the use of the church.

### **Other arrangements**

The parish has a list of people who may be contacted regarding the use of the organ, singing and flowers.