

Marriage

How do we arrange to marry in the parish?

Congratulations if you are engaged to be married!

A priest in the parish will require at least 3 months notice in advance of your planned wedding date. However, notice as early as possible is desirable.

Receiving the Sacrament of Matrimony involves much spiritual preparation and so prospective couples in the parish are asked to participate in an approved Marriage Preparation course. The priest will help in arranging this.

In addition to the needs of the Church there are civil obligations that must be fulfilled before a couple can marry in this jurisdiction.

What paperwork does the Church require before marriage?

Each couple should give the priest a minimum of 3 months notice before they intend to marry. In addition, each party must fill out a "Pre-Nuptial Enquiry Form". The prospective bride and groom must each meet separately with the priest before this Form can be completed. Prior to meeting with the priest you should have the following documents in your possession:

A recently issued copy of your Baptismal Certificate. A recently issued copy of your Confirmation Certificate. A Letter of Freedom from each parish you have lived in since you were 18. (This is a statement from the parish priest that you were never married).

The above documents indicate that you are a full member of the Church and that there is no record of you having been previously married in Church or if so that such marriage has come to an end upon the death of your spouse.

The "Pre-Nuptial Enquiry Form" records that the individual is baptized, confirmed and is free to marry. It also states that he or she has undertaken suitable preparation and has a good understanding of the duties and responsibilities of married life. This Form is retained in the archive of the parish where the wedding takes place.

What if I want to marry a person of another Christian denomination?

This is known as an Inter Church marriage. The Catholic party must obtain a dispensation from the diocesan bishop. This is contingent upon the Catholic person promising to baptize the children and raise them in the Catholic faith.

If you want the marriage to take place in the church of another denomination and according to its rites then a further dispensation of Form is required. The local bishop must also grant this permission.

What if I want to marry a non-baptised person or someone of another faith?

This is known as an Inter Faith marriage. A Disparity of Cult dispensation must be granted by the local bishop.

What are the State requirements for marriage?

Although you are marrying in the rite of the Catholic Church there is paperwork to complete in advance to ensure that your marriage is valid in the eyes of the State. The Marriage (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 sets out essential new requirements of the civil law for marriage. It is important that each party complies with the following steps:

- 1) Go to the local registrar and obtain a Notice of Marriage form as soon as possible. In this area you can acquire a form from Craigavon Borough Council, Civic Centre, PO Box 66, Lakeview Road, Craigavon BT64 1AL.
- 2) The Notice of Marriage form should be brought to the priest/deacon who is to officiate at the marriage (the officiant). He should sign the appropriate section of the form to indicate his willingness to officiate " he must be a registered officiant.
- 3) Each party must submit the completed Notice of Marriage form, relevant documents, declarations and fees to the Registrar of Marriages in the district where the marriage is to take place. It is recommended that you do this about 8 weeks before the wedding date.
- 4) When the Registrar is satisfied with the information, the Marriage Schedule will issue. It should be ready for

collection 14 days prior to the date of the marriage. It must be signed for by the prospective bride or groom.

5) You should bring the Marriage Schedule to the priest of the place where the marriage is taking place at least 3 days prior to the wedding. If no Marriage Schedule is presented to the officiant on the day of the wedding then no marriage can take place.

6) Immediately after the ceremony the Marriage Schedule must be signed by both parties, the officiant and two witnesses. You should be given the Marriage Schedule for which you sign a receipt.

7) You should return the Marriage Schedule to the local Registrar within 3 days of the wedding.