

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 brochure about 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 booklet.

No two weddings are the same, every marriage is different, and your situation will differ from the next couple, so this booklet is not a one size fits all. There may be things that crop up in the planning of your wedding ceremony that you'll want to discuss. Your officiating Priest, Parish and friendly Archdiocesan Staff are all here to help you.

**Marriage Ministry - Church Mission Team  
Archdiocese of Wellington**

# Getting married in the Catholic Church

## What you need to know...

- The first thing a couple need to do is to contact the local Parish Priest/office where you live. It's a good idea to ring the local Parish office and make an appointment to see your local Parish Priest/or Pastoral Agent.
- You must book the Church where you wish to marry. Some churches require this booking one year in advance of your wedding date, others may not need as much time. However it is important to check with your Officiating Priest before you set the date for your wedding. Some churches require you to sign an agreement and pay a deposit.
- You must ensure you have a Priest who has agreed to officiate your wedding.
- The Catholic Pre-nuptial Enquiry Forms for each person marrying are to be completed by the couple with a Priest or trained Pastoral Agent present to guide you. You will need to provide:
  - A Baptismal Certificate for the purposes of marriage. This is to be issued from the place of baptism within 6 months of the proposed marriage date.
  - A copy of Confirmation details if not recorded with baptismal details (separate certificate of copy).

- Proof of Freedom to Marry

- This may be in the form of a letter from the parishes in which you have lived in, or
- A letter from a parent or someone who knows you well, stating that you have never been married civilly or religiously before, or
- Sworn Affidavit stating you have never been married.

NOTE: It is important to check with your Officiating Priest regarding what form of proof of Freedom to Marry to provide as each situation is different and practices for this vary from place to place and country to country.

- If you are marrying a non-Catholic, your Priest will ask you, as the Catholic party, to sign a special form for this. It is a simple process. Your Priest understands that you may have questions about this, and will try to make this process as friendly and stress free as possible.
- Marriage Preparation Certificate (information about Marriage Preparation Courses are covered in Section 4 of this booklet).
- Permissions and Dispensations where applicable need to be applied for. These are outlined in the Pre-nuptial Enquiry papers. However if either party has been previously married, it is essential that 'Freedom to Marry' be established before any marriage arrangements can be confirmed. For further information contact:
  - Msgr Gerard Burns, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Wellington, ph: (04) 496 1737 or email: [g.burns@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:g.burns@wn.catholic.org.nz)
  - Louise Kelleher or Teena George, Tribunal of the Catholic Church in New Zealand, ph: (04) 496 1727 or email: [tribunal.wellington@catholic-tribunal.org.nz](mailto:tribunal.wellington@catholic-tribunal.org.nz)



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

- All Catholic marriages require Catholic Pre-Nuptial papers to be completed with a Priest or Pastoral Agent. Whether you are getting married in New Zealand or overseas, it is essential that you contact your Parish Priest/office as soon as possible to arrange an appointment to complete the marriage papers.
- Marriage papers are required for all weddings, both in and outside the church building.
- Your marriage papers are prepared in the place where you currently reside.
- If your wedding is to be held in a church of another denomination, another New Zealand Diocese or overseas, the papers are forwarded by your Parish Priest to the Vicar General, Monsignor Gerard Burns, in the Archdiocese of Wellington.



He will then provide any further documentation required.

- The marriage papers are then sent overseas or within NZ to the Bishop's representative (Vicar General or Vicar for Marriages) in the Diocese (Chancery office) where you are being married. They are then forwarded to the Priest who will officiate at your wedding. Please allow at least 6 months for this process.

The documentation (Pre-nuptial Enquiry papers and supporting documentation) outlined in Section 1 of this booklet will be included in your full dossier transfer.

- It is usual practice to post the documents overseas. However if you wish to have these papers couriered and tracked, the cost of this service will be on-charged to yourselves, following the delivery of the papers.

# Marriage Preparation Programmes

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

The Marriage Preparation Courses run in the Archdiocese of Wellington are designed to give you and your partner time to discuss and reflect upon important topics.

Your Marriage Preparation Course offers both of you the opportunity to reflect on how you communicate, to explore your understanding of commitment, how to manage conflict when arises, how to be responsible parents if you are blessed with children and how to live the sacrament of marriage.

During the Course, we invite you to spend quality time together reflecting on your relationship and your future, relax and enjoy an atmosphere that is respectful, confidential and welcoming to those of all faiths and beliefs.

Details of the current Marriage Preparation Courses are available online 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/)

If you have any questions and would like to talk about the details, you are welcome to contact:

- Mely Lau, Marriage Ministry Coordinator, Archdiocese of Wellington, ph: (04) 496 1719 or email: [marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz)



**ENROL NOW**

**Marriage Preparation Courses run in the Archdiocese of Wellington from 1 February to 30 November each year.**

# 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.



What you need to know...

- You need to arrange your licence at least 3 working days before you get married.
  - It expires after 3 months.
  - Your Priest will officiate your marriage and is 'the celebrant'. Priest in New Zealand are registered celebrants with the Department of Internal Affairs. To check if your priest 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.
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- Only one of you needs to complete the application, but you need correct information about both of you.
  - Apply online.
  - Anyone can apply online, whether you are in New Zealand or not.

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-married-licence/](http://www.govt.nz/browse/family-and-whanau/getting-married/get-a-married-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.

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*Lord God* we offer ourselves and our marriage to you. Help us to continue to grow together in love each day.

Sustain our love, O Lord.

May we be sensitive towards each other's needs, and be considered and kind in our actions.

Sustain our love, O Lord.

May our loving union be a reflection of your love for us and may we be united as were Jesus, Mary and Joseph in the Holy Family.

Sustain our love, O Lord.

May you bless us and keep us, may you keep our homes peaceful, graced with hospitality, friendship and love.

*Amen*

## SECTION 5

# 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 your lasting memories of a wonderful day.

It is always important to plan your wedding ceremony in conjunction with the Priest 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 now become one family.

For more information about planning your wedding ceremony, please talk to your officiating Priest. 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 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)

For more information, please contact:

**Mely Lau**

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Church Mission Team  
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[www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/church-mission/marriage-ministries/](http://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/church-mission/marriage-ministries/)  
[www.facebook.com/marriageadw](https://www.facebook.com/marriageadw)

