

# Preliminaries

---

You will need to give 12 months' notice prior to getting married at St Mary's Church, Studley. This rule is to ensure that there is enough time to complete the preparations for marriage. These include:

- A period of preparation with the priest who will marry you and attendance at a marriage preparation course. These are typically held on a Saturday.
- The priest who is marrying you will want to see you twice before the service, to get to know you and to talk in more detail about the meaning and importance of marriage.
- The Civil and Church paperwork. You need to advise the registrar in the place where each of you lives that you intend to marry. This needs to be done six months before the date of the wedding. Fr. Benedict needs to find out whether you are free to marry and to make certain that you are aware of the duties of Christian Marriage. Enquiries will need to be made in the Church where you were baptised and sometimes dispensations need to be sought - all of this can take some time.
- The priest will need to have your certificates of baptism. In the case of Catholics this needs to be a recent copy taken from the register of the Church where you were baptised within six months of the date of your wedding.
- If neither of you is resident within the boundaries of this parish, permission will need to be sought from Fr. Benedict of the place of residence of one of the parties

## Planning the ceremony.

---

There is always much to discuss in the planning of the ceremony. A wedding Mass or the wedding service; the readings, hymns and other music; who will be involved; flowers; photography; parking - to name only a few. This is the exciting part but it also needs time to get right.

There also needs to be a practice for the big day

## Freedom to Marry

---

You cannot be married in a Catholic Church if either of you has been married before, unless that marriage has been annulled by an ecclesiastical tribunal. This rule includes marriages that have taken place in register offices or in non-Catholic churches (although in the case of Catholics who have been married in non-Catholic services a declaration of nullity may be possible).

At least one of you must be a baptised Catholic. In cases where one of the parties has not been baptised in any Christian denomination a dispensation from the Archdiocese is required.

# The Ceremony

---

There are two forms of marriage, the Wedding Service and the Nuptial (Wedding) Mass.

- The Wedding Service is shorter and consists of up to three hymns, three readings, the vows, blessing and signing of the register. The choir, soloist and the organist can also play a part. This service takes about 45 minutes
- When the wedding takes place in the context of Mass, this is called a Nuptial Mass. All the usual parts of the Mass are present, readings, hymns, choral pieces and perhaps a musical Mass setting. The vows are taken after the Gospel and the sermon by the priest. The registers are usually signed at the end. This service takes about an hour and fifteen minutes.
- The readings chosen for your wedding must be from the Catholic Lectionary. The priest will be able to give you a booklet containing a good selection. Please make sure your readers know the form for beginning and ending the readings
- The hymns should be from the hymn books used in this church - they contain a good selection of traditional and modern hymns
- You should produce your own order of service; the priest will be able to help you with this. It should contain, at the very least, the texts of the readings and hymns

## Flowers and Confetti

- Please provide your own flowers for your wedding. If you don't know a florist the priest will be able to advise you about local firms who are used to working in our Church. Our own Parish flower arrangers may be able to help; the priest will give you their contact details. A few weeks before the date of your wedding please agree a time when the florist can come to the Church to check what is required
- Please ask your guests to use only biodegradable confetti. This should not be thrown near the Church entrance as it is difficult to clear up and quickly looks messy

## Costs

The Church is highly dependent on weddings for its upkeep and maintenance. There are charges for the use of the Church, certain legal fees for the registration of your marriage and for the services of the presiding priest. All charges will be discussed with you by the priest and will be payable **1 month** before the date of your wedding.

## Music

The music used in church should always be of a sacred nature. The reception is the place for other music.

In addition you may like to have a choir or a soloist sing at particular points in the ceremony, especially during the signing of the register. At a Nuptial Mass there may also be music at the offertory, at Holy Communion and for the Mass setting itself. Instrumentalists may be used.

You will need organ music for the entry and the exit. The priest will give you the contact details of our Parish organist.

## Photography

Please make sure that this is discreet during the service. Please ask the photographer to liaise with the priest before the service.

If there are musicians performing there may also be performers' rights issues.

## The Wedding Practice

We usually have a practice the evening before the wedding, at about 5pm. Obviously the bride and groom need to be there, but it also helps if the best man, the bridesmaids, the bride's father (or whoever is leading her up the aisle) and the ushers can be there too. We practise the entry and the exit, the vows and the rings.

Please bring the following things with you:

- a copy of the order of service
- other fees that have been discussed

## Useful Contacts

These may be found on [our website](#).

If you have questions or need any further information please don't hesitate to [contact](#) Fr. Benedict.