

preparing

Marriage is a profound commitment. It is a commitment that each party must choose freely, giving their full consent without reservation. Appropriate preparation is essential, both at the personal level and in regard to establishing that all is in order for the marriage to proceed. The first step in the process is for the couple to go to their local priest to make preliminary arrangements. Couples need to give at least three months notice to their own priest of their intention to get married.



The meetings of the couple with their priest are a key part of the preparation process. These meetings have taken on a new significance in recent times, because it can no longer be assumed that seeking a Church wedding is an expression of Christian faith on the part of one or both partners. These meetings are an opportunity for a couple to reflect on what Christian marriage asks of them.

Couples are strongly recommended to participate in a pre-marriage course (chiefly organised by Accord - the Church's marriage service), which are available in different centres in the diocese. These courses are designed to help the couple to grow in clarity about and appreciation of the nature of the commitment that is Christian marriage.

Useful Website - www.gettingmarried.ie

ACCORD www.accord.ie

Accord is a voluntary Catholic organisation that aims to promote a deeper understanding of Christian marriage. As well as pre-marriage courses, it offers a range of marital counselling and supports.

CARLOW - St Catherine's Community Centre, Station Rd., Carlow. Tel: 059 9138738

NEWBRIDGE - Parish Centre, Station Road, Newbridge. Tel: 045 431695

PORTLAOISE - Parish Centre (behind Parish Church) Portlaoise. Tel: 057 8661581

AGE

In this diocese, the bishop's permission is required for a Church marriage involving someone under 18. The Church sees that Christian marriage requires the capability for a mature commitment and therefore such permissions are only granted in exceptional circumstances

FREEDOM TO MARRY

The rules governing freedom to marry in the Catholic church can be complicated. The best advice when one party has been married previously (either in a civil or religious ceremony) is not to make arrangements until the diocesan office has been consulted.

MARRIAGE PAPERS

Standard paperwork - the 'pre-nuptial enquiry' form - must be completed for each wedding, usually by your local priest. The priest must clearly establish that both parties are free to marry in the church and will need to include a recently issued Baptism certificate and a Confirmation certificate.

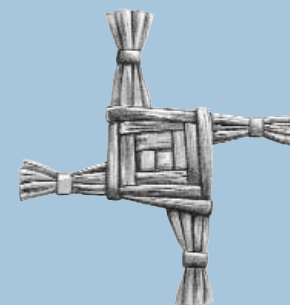
MIXED MARRIAGES

Special permissions are required for full church recognition of marriages between a Roman Catholic and a baptised non-RC or someone unbaptised. Applications are handled by the diocesan office once the priest of the catholic party has forwarded the standard paperwork. See www.kandle.ie for more details.

CIVIL MARRIAGE

The couple has ultimate responsibility for all arrangements regarding the civil aspect of their marriage. See www.kandle.ie for more details.

A GUIDE TO SACRAMENTS



Diocese of Kildare & Leighlin



MARRIAGE

“We thank you Lord, and we praise you for bringing us to this happy day”

MARRIAGE RITE

Marriage is one of the seven sacraments of the Church. For Christians, marriage is an on-going act of faith, a vocation. In each marriage ceremony, the community witness a sign of God's love in the world.



understanding

The Church honours and treasures the married love between husband and wife. For Christians, marriage mirrors the relationship between Christ and the Church. Thus married love was described by St. Paul as a "great mystery" (Ephesians 5:32) and came to be recognised as one of the seven sacraments.

Marriage, like other vocations, calls us to reflect God's love to the world in a particular way. Married people in their exclusive and life long commitment to each other witness to and draw strength from how Christ has loved us.

The wedding vows that the couple exchange express what is at the heart of Christian marriage. The words - "for better or worse" - point to the truth that life together will have its challenges as well as its rewards. The grace of the sacrament inspires the couple to turn to the Lord not just in days of happiness but also in times of sorrow, to seek the strength to transform any situation with love and indeed forgiveness.

It is important to state that, while upholding the value of perseverance and the hope of reconciliation, the Church does not demand that anybody remain in a situation that has become impossible.

In the Catholic tradition, marriage requires a willingness on behalf of the couple to welcome the children with whom they may be blessed. At the same time, the church holds that married life is fruitful and life-giving of itself.



In becoming husband and wife you give yourselves to each other for life. You promise to be true and faithful, to support and cherish each other until death, so that your years together will be the living out in love of the pledge you now make. May your love for each other reflect the enduring love of Christ for his Church.'

Marriage Rite

Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love bears all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends'

I Corinthians 13:4,7-8

'May your blessing come upon them. May they find happiness in their love for each other and enrich the life of the Church. May they praise you in their days of happiness and turn to you in times of sorrow. May they know the joy of your help in their work and the strength of your presence in their need.'

Nuptial Blessing

The Christian home is the place where children receive the first proclamation of the faith. For this reason the family home is rightly called 'the domestic church,' a community of grace and prayer, a school of human virtues and Christian charity.

Catechism of Catholic Church 1666

celebrating

Marriage is an occasion of deep significance in the life of the Christian community and is celebrated as a liturgy of the Church. Usually it takes place during Mass. The Marriage Rite can also be celebrated outside Mass. This can be a more appropriate form of the ritual in certain instances.

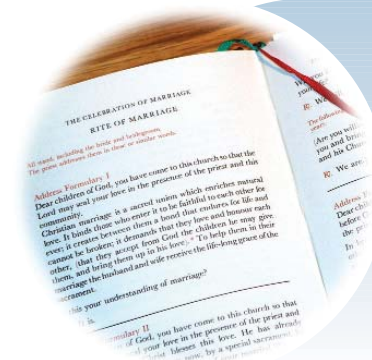
The couple as ministers of the sacrament

In the marriage ritual, the two people marry each other. They are the ministers of the sacrament. It is they who will exchange vows before God and the assembled community. The priest's role is to receive their consent, to act as a witness, to lead prayer and to bestow God's blessing.



Planning the ceremony

As ministers of the sacrament, each couple is encouraged to put their own shape on the day. The priest has a responsibility to advise the couple in their choices regarding the liturgy – readings, prayers, music and choice of vows. Couples are encouraged to look for such guidance early in the process. Family and friends are also encouraged to participate in the ceremony.



Key elements of the Liturgy

Key elements within the Marriage ceremony include:

- the Liturgy of the Word
- the consent of the couple
- the special nuptial blessing for the marriage
- and, if during Mass, the reception of Holy Communion



When and Where

In this diocese, marriage can take place on any day other than Sundays and major feast days - contact local priest or see www.kandle.ie for more details. A church local to one of the couple is the usual choice but not essential. It should be noted that the sacrament can be celebrated very simply with two witnesses if a couple so choose, or with a small group of family and friends.

