

Guidelines For Celebrating Marriage In St. Brigid's Parish, Clara & Horseleap, Co. Offaly, Ireland.

It is our hope that your Wedding Day will be a happy one and we hope that God will bless you both in a very special way on that particular day.

"There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The Mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and His disciples had also been invited." (John 2.1).

The wine ran out at the wedding in Cana -maybe it was because of a lack of prayer and preparation?! But Jesus was prepared to step in and rescue the situation. In your preparation for your Marriage ceremony, it would be appropriate to ask God's help and guidance, seek his forgiveness and mercy and pray for His blessing on your future life together.

May Jesus and his Mother Mary be as present to you on your Wedding Day as they were in Cana and may their presence help you and guide you through your married life.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION -Church and State

Church Requirements

Both Bride and Groom are expected to give at least four months' notice to your respective Parish Priest(s), where you are now living. He will help and guide with the prescribed documents in accordance with Canon (Church) Law. At least six weeks before the wedding date, the parish priest of the bride will need to forward to the Parish Office in Clara Parish both sets of completed papers, signed and sealed, containing:

1. Recent Baptism Certificates
2. Certificates of Confirmation
3. Letters of Freedom
4. Pre-Nuptial Enquiry Forms
5. Permissions, Dispensations, etc. (where necessary)
6. Confirmation of completion of a Pre-Marriage Course –*that includes appropriate attention to the Sacramental aspect of marriage, e.g. ACCORD.*

For a couple living outside Ireland, all of the above listed papers, completed for both parties, should be sent by the Parish Priest of the Bride to his Diocesan Bishop or Local Ordinary, who will forward them for Nihil Obstat to: Bishop Tom Deenihan, Meath Diocesan Offices, Dublin Road, Mullingar, County Westmeath.

Irish Civil Law Requirements (Website –www.groireland.ie for marriage requirements)

1. The couple must present at a registrar's office three months at the latest before the wedding and give notice of their intent.
2. They must furnish the details of the wedding, make a declaration of no impediment and provide any other information required. If they cannot present in person they can apply by writing (even e-mail) but if so they must go to the registrar's office at least five days before the wedding and make the declaration of no impediment.
3. On that occasion or earlier by post they will receive the MRF (Marriage Registration Form) for which they take full responsibility. If that is not at hand on the day of the wedding the wedding cannot proceed.
4. They must also make a verbal declaration of no impediment before the solemniser (officiating priest) and witnesses no earlier than two days before they make their declaration of consent to be husband and wife. It is their responsibility too to ensure this is done since otherwise their marriage will be civilly invalid.
5. After the MRF (Marriage Registration Form) has been signed by the couple it is their responsibility to return it to the registrar's office within a month. Failure to do so can involve a hefty fine.
6. List of Solemnisers:
 - a. In order to officiate at a marriage priests (called Solemnisers) must be on the 'List of Solemnisers' submitted by each local Bishop to the Registrar-General.

- b. If the priest, whom the couple have chosen to officiate at their marriage, is not a priest of the parish, it is important for the couple to be aware that he must be a Registered Solemniser.
- c. If a priest is not on the 'List of Solemnisers', and wishes to officiate at a marriage, he must become a Temporary Solemniser. He can do this by submitting a request to the Bishop of the place of marriage together with an appropriate Testimonial Letter signed by his Ordinary (i.e. Bishop or Provincial Superior).

The websites GettingMarried.ie or ACCORD.ie are very useful resources for any Catholic couple preparing to get married in Ireland.

The following details will both help you and facilitate us in providing a relaxed and beautiful occasion for your marriage.

Music

In accordance with diocesan regulations and norms, a wide range of suitable hymns and liturgical music, reflecting the richness of the Sacrament and the sanctity of the Mass, is available.

Flowers

Our Church is ornate and extravagant displays of flowers are not necessary. Only free-standing floral arrangements are allowed and only tie-bows may be used on seats, and no flowers are to be placed on, or in front of, the main central altar. The use of pins, nails or drawing pins for attaching items to walls or seats **is prohibited**. It is traditional and respectful to leave some of the flowers from your wedding ceremony on the centre and/or side altars. Confetti is not allowed in Church or Church grounds. Please remove bouquets attached to seats immediately after the ceremony. Out of respect for the sacred space that church building is we request that you leave the church clean and tidy after the ceremony.

If you've any other questions, please contact the parish office on 057-9331170

Cameras and Videos

Photographers may use the Sanctuary and we respectfully ask they do not to interrupt the ceremony -repeat poses are not acceptable. All large group photographs are taken outside the Church. Church microphones, amplifiers or light fittings are not to be tampered with.

Fees

For couples from outside Clara Parish the Church fee is €500. As our sacristans are voluntary it is also customary for a donation to be given to the sacristan on the day. It is suggested that all fees be paid in advance.

Thank you again for your interest in getting married in the parish. Bookings of either St. Brigid's Church, Clara or St. Peter and Paul's Church in Horseleap may be made by telephone (057) 9331170. Please complete, and return to us, the "Marriage Form" containing information required for our Parish records. Thank you for your co-operation.

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