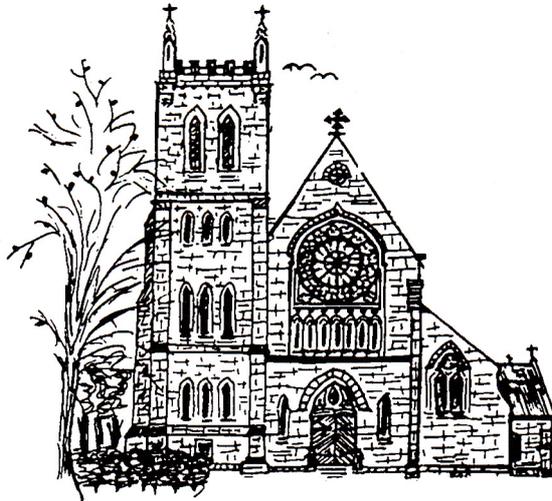


**Celebrating
The Sacrament of Marriage
In Our Parish**



CHURCH OF THE SACRED HEART
Donnybrook

**Guidelines for Parishioners of Donnybrook
Congratulations**

Congratulations and welcome to Sacred Heart Donnybrook for the celebration of your marriage. I hope that this time of preparation will be a happy time for you. The parish staff will be happy to help you in your preparation.

The months coming up to your marriage can be very busy. It can be difficult to find the time and space to reflect on what your marriage is all about. Christian marriage is a Sacrament. In other words, it is one of the ways in which Jesus Christ continues to be present and active among his people. By choosing to

celebrate your marriage as Christians, you commit yourselves to making your own love a sign of Christ's love, for each other, for your children, and for the community in which you live.

The Bible tells us that God is faithful, and that he never takes back his love, even when his people let him down. Your day to day acceptance of one another; your care for each other, year in and year out; your life long fidelity - all of these are ways of making the love of Christ really present to each another and in the world around you.

The Bible speaks to us of a God who wants to share his love; a God who gives life, and cares for it. Love grows when it is shared. You may be blessed with children, who will depend on you for care (both material and spiritual). Your acceptance of the children God may send you, and your care for them, is your participation in the creative love of God.

What You Need To Do First

Reserving the Church

As soon as you have chosen a date for your marriage, please ring the Parish Office to ensure that the date is available in the Church.

We wish to advise you that we expect to have some renovations carried out in the Sacred Heart Church during 2017/2018. The timing of this work will be determined by various factors, some of which are outside of our control. Your booking is accepted on the understanding that we will facilitate you in making alternative arrangements in the unlikely event that the Church will not be available or in a suitable condition for your celebration on the date in question. We will update you as soon as we receive further details.

***Please note:** The reservation of the Church is made on the understanding that you are free to marry both in civil law and in the law of the Church. If either of you has ever been married previously, (whether in a Church or in a civil ceremony), or if you are in any doubt about your freedom to marry, please mention this at the time of making your request. This will help to avoid any unforeseen complications.*

Three Months Notice to the Parish

A mature decision to marry is not something you arrive at on the spur of the moment. The experience of the Church would suggest that marriages which take place at short notice, or at a very young age, may not be based on a mature decision, and may therefore be more at risk. For this reason, it is required that each person being married should notify his / her local priest (i.e., in the parish where you are currently resident) at least three months before the marriage. If either person is under eighteen years of age, the period of notice is six months. Ideally, you should make initial contact as early as possible, so that we can help you with your preparation.

Your Responsibilities in Civil Law

The State recognises Marriages celebrated according the Rites of the Catholic Church, provided these marriages are celebrated in accordance with civil law. Current legislation on the Civil Registration of Marriages came into effect on November 5th 2007. In keeping with that legislation, couples who wish to marry in the Catholic Church are required to do the following:

- Give notice in person to the civil registrar no less than three months before the date of your intended marriage. This can be done in any office of the civil registration service throughout the state, but it will require the making of an appointment, and the three months begins from the date of your interview. During the interview couples will be asked to make a written declaration that there is no civil law impediment to their marriage. Couples are strongly recommended to do this well in advance of the three months, as there may be some difficulty in obtaining an appointment.

In exceptional circumstances (e.g. where a couple will be coming from overseas) permission may be obtained from the registrar to give the three months notice in writing. In such circumstances, they will still be required to attend for interview within five days of the marriage, to make the written declaration of no impediment. Contact details for the offices of the civil registration service are given at: www.hse.ie/en/FindaService/. The Wicklow office can be contacted at 0404-68400.

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Establish that the priest whom you have invited to celebrate your marriage is on the State's approved list of solemnisers. If he is not on the list (if, for example, he is coming from outside the Republic of Ireland) then an application will have to be made to have him temporarily included. You can discuss this with the Parish Priest, but this should normally be done before you make your notification to the civil registrar.

- Obtain from the Civil Registrar a Marriage Registration Form, which you must bring with you on the day of your marriage. Without this document, your marriage will not be recognised in civil law.
- Make a verbal declaration within two days prior to your marriage, in the presence of the priest and your two witnesses, that there is no impediment in civil law to your marriage. In practice this will normally take place just after you have arrived at the Church, and before the Sacramental celebration begins.
- Sign the Marriage Registration Form immediately after the ceremony, and take it with you to be registered by you at the office of the civil registrar within one month. This is now your responsibility, whereas previously it tended to be done by the parish.

Note

All of the above requirements relate to civil law, and are distinct from the procedures and paper-work required under Church law, for couples celebrating marriage in the Catholic Church.

The above information is provided in good faith, but couples are advised to check the detail of what is required with the Civil Registration Service. Sacred Heart Parish cannot accept any responsibility for the consequences of failure on the part of a couple to fulfill their responsibilities in civil law.

Then

Pre-Marriage Preparation

We generally prepare carefully for anything which is important. Preparation for marriage could be looked at under two headings.

1. preparation is about gathering information about married life which will help you to make the big decision, and all the other decisions which follow from that.
2. preparation is also about assessing your own personal readiness for marriage, and the maturity of your relationship. Nobody else can prepare you, but various people can help, including family members, friends, and the priest of your parish.

Pre-Marriage Courses

Some formal preparation for marriage must be undertaken. It is strongly recommended that couples participate in a pre-marriage course. Most courses provide a certain amount of input on questions such as finance, home-making, fertility, parenthood, and preparing the marriage celebration. The real value of the courses is probably in that they help to focus your own discussion, and provide the opportunity of talking with other couples in a “safe environment.”

Pre-marriage courses are provided by:

- Accord: Accord runs courses at various centres, of which Bray is probably the nearest. Courses must be booked centrally at the Accord office, 39 Harcourt St., Tel. 4784400. (Web: www.accord.ie)
- NAOMI: Runs pre-marriage courses which include a focus on helping couples to understand and appreciate their fertility. Tel. 01-878 6156. (EMail: inforequest@naomi.ie)
- Jesuits: Courses take place at Milltown Park, Dublin 6. Tel. 2698802.
- Passionists: Courses take place at Mount Argus, Dublin 6, Tel. 4923165.
- Association of Inter-Church Families: These courses for inter-church couples can be booked by contacting the Accord office.

Courses tend to be heavily booked, so it is advisable to make enquiries soon after becoming engaged.

Church Documentation

Documentation is not the most important thing about preparing for marriage, but it is important.

A. Documents for Marriage between two Catholics

1. Pre-Nuptial Enquiry:

Each person completes this form with the priest in his / her present parish of residence. No other priest is authorised to carry out this procedure without the consent of your parish priest. This is to ensure that someone is seen to be responsible for the process, and to protect you from any complications which might arise if the process were not correctly carried out. The PNE is

- a gathering of personal details for the register,
- a way of establishing your freedom to marry, and
- a statement of your intent to marry in accordance with the Christian vision of marriage.

The form is provided by the priest.

2. Baptismal Certificate:

Each of you will need a Baptismal Certificate which has been issued and dated not more than six months prior to the date of your marriage. This can be obtained by contacting the Church where you were Baptised. It should be given to the priest preparing your pre-nuptial enquiry. It is desirable that you also obtain a certificate of Confirmation. This may be included on your Baptism Certificate, if the register has been updated.

3. Letters of Freedom:

These are required in respect of any other parish in which you have lived for more than six months since the age of sixteen. (If this presents a practical difficulty there are alternative procedures, and you should explore this with the priest completing your papers).

B. Inter-Church Marriage

Marriage between a Catholic and a Christian of another denomination is quite common. The Catholic partner requires the documents already mentioned above, and will also need to apply for a dispensation for inter-church marriage. The purpose of this is to help you as a couple to ensure that you have discussed any issues, related to your difference of religious denomination, which might otherwise be a cause of difficulty for you in the future.

The partner of the other denomination will need a baptismal certificate, and a sworn affidavit or written statement from a parent or other close relative to the

effect that he / she has never been married previously, either in a civil or a religious ceremony.

C. Marriage with a Person who is not a Christian

Arrangements can also be made to celebrate a marriage in the Catholic Church, between a Catholic and a person who is not-baptised. This should be discussed in the first instance with the priest in your parish of residence.

Who does the papers for you?

Irrespective of where you are celebrating your marriage, if you are currently resident in Donnybrook, then your notification is made to Mgr. Lorcan O'Brien or Fr. Conor Harper who will prepare your papers for you.

If your normal residence is outside the parish, somewhere in Ireland, and you are celebrating your marriage here, your papers should be prepared by the priest where you are living, and sent here to Mgr. Lorcan O'Brien at the address given below.

If you are living abroad, then the priest in the parish where you live prepares the papers. He then forwards them to the Bishop of the Diocese in which you are living, who checks them, and sends them to: The Chancellery, Archbishop's House, Drumcondra, Dublin 9. They will notify us that everything is in order. This process can take some time, so it is advisable to begin no later than three months before the marriage.

Planning The Ceremony

The heart of your wedding day is the making of your commitment to each other, in the presence of your families and friends. Though it may last less than an hour, the marriage ceremony will be the focal point of the day.

You are the ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage, because it is you who give yourselves to each other. The priest is present as witness to your commitment on behalf of the Christian community, and to bless your union. For the celebration of your marriage, there are many options open to you. The priest will help you to plan the liturgy. (As a parishioner of Donnybrook, one of the priests of the parish will be very happy to celebrate your marriage, but you may also invite a relative or friend who is a priest).

A very useful book to help couples preparing the marriage ceremony is *A Wedding of Your Own* by Padraic Mc. Carthy, (Veritas Publications). It contains a wide selection of Scripture readings, as well as the alternative forms for the exchange of consent, and the other variable parts of the ceremony. The web site www.gettingmarried.ie includes similar information, and offers you a tool for designing your marriage booklet.

What Kind of Celebration?

Generally speaking, in the case of two Catholics, the marriage ceremony takes place during Mass, after you have listened to the Scripture readings. This is particularly appropriate, because the Mass is the celebration of Christ's gift of himself in love for his people. It is also possible to incorporate your marriage ceremony in a celebration of Scripture readings, prayers, and music, but without the Mass. This may be appropriate in the case of an inter-Church marriage, or in the case of a marriage between Catholics who don't regularly attend Mass.

Readings

You may choose one or two Scripture readings, a responsorial psalm, and a Gospel passage, for the celebration of your marriage. The priest will normally read the Gospel. If you wish, the other readings may be read by family members or friends.

Declaration of Consent

You may choose from a number of forms of the Declaration of Consent. Some are simpler while others allow more participation by yourselves. Choose the one you feel most comfortable with, and the priest celebrating your marriage will help you on the day.

Communion

If you wish, the bridal party may receive Holy Communion under both forms (i.e., the forms of bread and wine). It is not something *more*, because there is only one Jesus who is present under either form. Receiving under both kinds simply reflects more completely the symbolism of the Last Supper. Whatever you decide, please let the priest know in advance.

Equally, if someone in the bridal party does not wish to receive Holy Communion, he / she should inform the celebrant in advance, so that there is no awkwardness on the day. You may receive a blessing if you choose not to receive Holy Communion.

Music

Music and singing can make an important contribution to the celebration of your marriage. Some couples like traditional pieces (e.g., Ave Maria etc.), while others prefer something more modern. The most important consideration is that the music and singing that you choose reflect the meaning of Christian Marriage. There is a fairly wide selection available. A member of the parish music team will be happy to advise you.

If you wish to make use of the organ, we will be happy to advise you regarding a competent organist who will be happy to play for your wedding. You may prefer another style of music (e.g. folk group, string quartet etc.) These are welcome, always providing that the music is appropriate to the liturgy.

Altar Servers

Altar servers are not required, but can be an addition to the ceremony. If you would like to have altar servers, please let us know on the booking form and we will make the necessary arrangements

The Signing of the Register

After the celebration of your marriage, you will be invited to sign the document which will be used to register your marriage with the civil authorities. This is a civil act, and there are some important differences between how marriage is understood in civil law and in the law of the Church. For this reason, the signing is kept distinct from the religious ceremony. It may take place on a table placed in the sanctuary, but not on the altar table itself.

Nearer the Time

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)

Your marriage is a commitment to one another. Since you are marrying as Christians, it is also a renewal of your Christian commitment. (It may be your first formal Christian commitment as an adult). The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) is an acknowledgement of our human weakness, and a celebration of God's forgiveness. It is very much the Sacrament of new beginnings, and we encourage you to make it part of your preparation for marriage.

Confessions are heard in Donnybrook Church on Saturdays after the 10am Mass and after the 6pm (vigil) Mass. One of the priests of the parish will also be happy to celebrate this Sacrament with you at some other time, if this would be of help, as part of your preparation for your marriage.

Flowers

Please keep us informed of your plans in relation to flowers, so that we can facilitate whoever is making these arrangements for you. We ask you particularly to ensure that floral arrangements are not fixed to the seats using adhesive substances, pins or nails.

Wedding Rehearsal

It is usual to have a short rehearsal near the day of your wedding. In so far as possible, anyone playing a part in the ceremony should be present. The rehearsal, as well as finalising details of the ceremony, allows the priest the opportunity of meeting the other members of the bridal party etc. Please consult the parish secretary, Oonagh O'Toole, about the time of the rehearsal.

Photographs and Video:

We will be happy to facilitate a photographer and / or video camera-person at the church. Ask them to come early and to contact the celebrant, who will advise them on where they should position themselves. If they are good at their job, they should be able to operate discretely. If other people are also taking photos and videos during the ceremony it can be a distraction for you and for the celebrant.

Photographs of the bride are often taken on arrival at the Church. This can take longer than you might imagine. We ask you to arrange with your photographer to allow time for this, so that the ceremony may start as near as possible to the appointed time.

Confetti and Rice

We are sure you will understand if we ask your guests to refrain from using confetti or rice in the Church grounds.

Red Carpets

Donnybrook Parish does not supply a red carpet. We ask you to be particularly careful to instruct whoever supplies your carpet that, while appropriate arrangements must be made to ensure the safety of your guests, no adhesive tape of any-kind may be used to fix it the carpet to the floor. Our experience is that such tape invariably leaves a residue that can take hours to remove.

Offerings

The assumption is made that parishioners are supporting the parish financially on an on-going basis. For this reason, in the case of parishioners, there is no fixed fee for the use of the Church. We simply ask you to make an offering to the Church which you can afford, and which you feel is appropriate.

(In the event that a visiting priest celebrates the marriage, any offering you make to him is a separate matter, for your own discretion). If you request altar servers, it is normal to make a small offering to them. Other fees (e.g.; organist, singer, florist, photographer etc.) are arranged directly by you.

Afterwards

If you are making your home in this parish we are happy to welcome you, and we look forward to the part which you and your family will play in the parish community in the years to come. If your future home is in another parish, we encourage you to introduce yourself to the priests of your new parish after you have settled in.

Wherever you live, your life as a Christian married couple is important to the community of the parish, and to the future of the Church. Remember that the love you bring to each other, and to those around you, needs to be nourished through your own closeness to Christ. Each time you participate in the Mass, you will not only celebrate the self-giving love of Christ, but you will be reminded of your own gift to each other, and you will hear His Word, calling you always to new ways of living that love.

Contact Details

Parish Clergy

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Fr. Conor Harper

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Parish Secretary

Mrs. Oonagh O'Toole

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