



GETTING MARRIED AT THE CATHEDRAL

Information
for couples

PRAYER BEFORE MARRIAGE

Lord God,
source of all love,
your providence has brought us together.
As we prepare for the sacrament of marriage
we pray for your grace,
that, strengthened by your blessing,
we may grow in respect for one another
and cherish each other with a sincere love.
Abide in us, guide our steps,
and confirm our hearts in his love,
now and for ever.
Amen.

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for enquiring about the possibility of celebrating your wedding in Westminster Cathedral, or for seeking our help to prepare for your wedding in a Catholic Church elsewhere.

This booklet summarises much of what the priest will explain when he meets with you, and will be a useful point of reference as your wedding plans progress.

We are here to help you as much as we can in this important time of preparation for your wedding, and we wish you much happiness in the years ahead.

Our contact details are:

Westminster Cathedral
Clergy House
42 Francis Street
London
SW1P 1QW

Tel: 020 7798 9055

Email: registrar@rcdow.org.uk

Website: www.westminstercathedral.org.uk

PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE

Marriage is a sacrament of the Church, given by God, and the decision to marry is one of the most important choices of anyone's life.

The Church teaches that marriage is a faithful and life-long union between a man and a woman, established by God and ordered for the mutual welfare and support of the couple, and as the context for raising children. When asking to be married in the Catholic Church you are accepting this Catholic understanding of marriage:

In view of the importance and dignity of marriage, the Bishops require a minimum of **six months' notice**, so that the couple can make proper practical and spiritual preparation.

A necessary part of this preparation is attendance at a pre-marriage course. The priest with whom you are making your marriage arrangements will be able to offer you advice about marriage courses.

If either party has previously been in any form of marriage or partnership, whether civil or religious (in any Christian denomination or other faith), it is essential that this is made known to the Cathedral Chaplain with whom you are in contact at the earliest opportunity. No dates should be booked or arrangements made until he has advised how best to proceed.

MARRIAGE PAPERWORK

CIVIL LAW DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

The civil law lays down a minimum age of 16 for marriage. Parental consent is needed between the ages of 16 and 18. No marriage can take place in the Cathedral or any other Catholic church without a Marriage Schedule document issued by the local authority Registrar. You must apply for this at your local Register Office; after the statutory period of notice, the document will be given to you and must be brought with you to the Cathedral.

1. Seven days' residence within the Registration District is necessary prior to giving notice of marriage to the Registrar.
2. Each party to the marriage must give notice of their intention to marry, in person, to the Superintendent Registrar of the Registration District where they reside. Both go to the same Register Office if they live in the same Registration District. A fee is payable for each notice. The fee may be higher if one of the parties is from outside the EEA or Switzerland.
3. The Superintendent Registrar may issue the Marriage Schedule 28 full days after notice has been given. Please bear in mind that for those from outside the EEA or Switzerland, or with limited or no immigration status in the UK, up to 70 days' notice may be required.

When you go to give notice of marriage at the Register Office, you need to take along a document to prove your name, age and nationality (eg a civil birth certificate or passport) and proof of your address (eg a valid driving licence, a bank statement from the last month, or a utility bill from the last 3 months). If you are under 23, your birth certificate must be produced.

Most of the Cathedral Chaplains are 'Authorised Persons', able to witness the marriage and sign the Schedule document. After the marriage the Schedule is returned to the local authority Registrar, who will issue the Marriage Certificate, and any additional copies required, within a fixed period. If proof of the marriage is required before the Marriage Certificate is issued (e.g. in case of international travel for a honeymoon), this should be requested in advance of the marriage from the Registrar. Please note that from May 2021 Catholic churches are no longer able to issue copy Marriage Certificates, for which application must be made online to the General Register Office or at the local Register office. The Cathedral continues to record marriages in its own Catholic Marriage Register.

If you wish to marry a non-British subject you are advised to contact the relevant Embassy or Consulate, or to get in touch with the Immigration Advisory Service, 70 Borough High Street, London SE1 1XF. Tel: 020 7989 0005.

CHURCH LAW DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

For a Catholic:

1. A recent **Baptism Certificate**, issued within six months of the date of the wedding. Older or original certificates cannot be accepted.
2. A **Confirmation Certificate**, if you have been confirmed.
3. **Permission to marry** from the Parish Priest of the parish in which you are currently resident, if you do not live within the Cathedral parish.
4. A **Statutory Declaration of Freedom**, signed and witnessed by a Commissioner of Oaths (ie a solicitor). The priest will be able to provide you with the necessary form.

For a non-Catholic:

1. If you have been baptised, a copy of your **Baptism Certificate**. In this case there is no six month rule, so the original copy will suffice.
2. A **Statutory Declaration of Freedom**, signed and witnessed by a Commissioner of Oaths (ie a solicitor). The priest will be able to provide you with the necessary form.

For a non-Christian or a non-believer:

1. A **Statutory Declaration of Freedom**, signed and witnessed by a Commissioner of Oaths (ie a solicitor). The priest will be able to provide you with the necessary form.

Whatever your religion, if one or both of you is under 18 you must obtain a letter from your parents giving you permission to marry. The person you are to marry must be mentioned by name.

DISPENSATIONS & PERMISSIONS

If one of the parties to the marriage is a non-Catholic baptised Christian the priest will need to obtain **Permission for a Mixed Marriage** from the bishop of the Catholic party.

If one of the parties is not baptised in any Christian denomination, is a member of another faith (e.g. he or she is Jewish, Muslim, or Hindu), or has no religion, the priest will need to ask the bishop of the Catholic party for a **Dispensation from Disparity of Worship**.

Whenever a Catholic marries someone of another denomination or faith, or of no religion, the Catholic is asked to sign a promise to continue living their own faith and to do all in their power to have children of the marriage baptised and brought up in the Catholic Faith. The non-Catholic party must be made aware of this and must be agreeable to the Catholic party signing such a promise.

In special circumstances a **Dispensation from the Impediment of Canonical Form** can be given by the bishop to permit a marriage to take place in a Christian church that is not Catholic.

Other Dispensations are required for intended marriages between first cousins, or other close family or blood relations. The priest will be able to provide more information and, if needed, will help you to obtain these.

Please note that it may not be possible to provide a confirmed date for your wedding service until the Cathedral is satisfied that all paperwork, Church and Civil, is in good order.

CHECKLIST OF DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

- Baptism Certificates
- Confirmation Certificates
- Statutory Declarations of Freedom
- Permission for Catholic party to marry outside parish of residence (if applicable)
- Marriage Schedule Document from the Register Office (not two certificates)
- Certificate of, or letter confirming, attendance at a pre-marriage course

MARRIAGE DOCUMENTATION FEES

For all marriages needing the involvement of the Chancery (eg for permissions, dispensations, all marriages outside England and Wales), a Chancery Fee of **£50** is charged. A cheque should be made out by the couple to 'WRCDT'; the Cathedral Chaplain who is assisting with the paperwork will send this, along with the relevant requests or documents, to the Chancery.

The Cathedral charges a fee of **£50** (payable via details on page 7) for preparation of documents for weddings which do not take place at Westminster Cathedral.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION AND SCHEDULE OF FEES

INVOLVEMENT OF CLERGY

It is usual that one of the Cathedral Chaplains officiates at all weddings in the Cathedral. If you would like to invite another Catholic priest to participate in any way, please discuss this at any early stage in your planning with the Chaplain with whom you are in contact.

LIVE-STREAMING

The Cathedral now has its own live-streaming feed, which you may use via the Cathedral website if they wish. If live-streaming takes place in the Cathedral there will be a £550 fee and the Cathedral must be notified no less than 4 weeks before the wedding. Please note if the Cathedral musicians are taking part in the service this will also incur the recording cost.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RECORDING

Photography is permitted during the service, by a photographer of your choice, as long as he or she operates within reasonable limits, and is sensitive to the sacred nature of the service. A video camera is allowed at a fixed and agreed position in the Cathedral. If the Cathedral musicians are taking part in the service this will incur the recording cost. The Music Department will be able to offer further information when you meet with them.

CONFETTI

You are asked to request that your guests do not throw confetti, rice, or anything similar in the Cathedral, or outside on the steps. Please save it for later in the day elsewhere.

FLOWERS

The priest will be pleased to offer general advice on the sort of floral arrangements that fit well in the Cathedral. The Cathedral recommends Mary Jane Vaughan Flowers (e-mail maryjane@maryjanevaughan.co.uk or phone 020 7385 8400), who know the Cathedral well and we believe they provide a good standard of service. If you wish to use another florist, please discuss this with the priest before making any arrangements.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Victoria and St James's Park stations are less than five minutes' walk from the Cathedral. Buses 11, 24, 148, 211 and 507 (towards Victoria) stop immediately in front of the Cathedral on Victoria Street.

PARKING

There is no parking on the Cathedral site. A limited amount of 'pay by phone' parking is in the immediate vicinity. The nearest large off-street car park is on Semley Place, London, SW1W 9QL, about ten minutes' walk from the Cathedral.

WEDDING FEES FOR USE OF THE CATHEDRAL

Wedding Mass or Service
(Parishioners, living within the geographical boundaries of this
Parish) £1000

Wedding Mass or Service
(Non-Parishioners, living outside the geographical boundaries of
this Parish) £2500

SACRISTAN FEE

A charge of £100 is made to cover the overtime of a sacristan to assist in preparing and clearing up after a wedding in the Cathedral.

SECURITY OVERTIME

A charge of £80 per hour (or part thereof) per security personnel is made for use of the Cathedral outside the normal hours of operation, or outside their normal hours of work (including when extra staff are needed to cover a Special Service).

ALTERATIONS TO LAYOUT OF CHAIRS, LIGHTING, AND OTHER MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT USE

The cost of hiring the Cathedral's Maintenance team depends on the nature of the required work. Please ask for details. A charge of £170 is made for cleaning if required.

WEDDING MUSIC

Music in Westminster Cathedral takes place under the supervision of the Cathedral's staff of professional musicians. Many couples wish to include music in their wedding service, and all arrangements for this need to be made with the Music Department.

You are asked to make contact with the Music Department at least three months before your wedding if you would like to have music at the service: please telephone 020 7798 9057 or e-mail musicadmin@rcdow.org.uk. A phone call or meeting can be arranged with members of the Music Department to discuss the options for music at the wedding.

You are kindly asked to note that the Music Department does not allow recorded music (CDs etc) to be played during weddings at Westminster Cathedral.

The Music Department will be able to offer detailed information about the costs of music for your wedding.

REQUEST FOR PAYMENT

Once the arrangements have been finalised, the Cathedral Precentor will issue a Request for Payment with details of how to make payment.

THE WEDDING SERVICE

Whether you choose to have a Wedding Service or a Nuptial Mass, there are various options open to you in planning the service, particularly in the choice of readings from the Scriptures, the bidding prayers, and the music.

OUTLINE ORDER OF SERVICE

Entrance of the Bride
Welcome by the priest
Gloria (If there is a Nuptial Mass)
Collect (opening prayer)
[Reading from the Old Testament - optional]
Reading from the New Testament
Responsorial psalm (or psalm hymn)
Alleluia (or other Gospel acclamation if in Lent)
Gospel (read by the priest)
Sermon
Rite of Marriage
Bidding Prayers
[Liturgy of the Eucharist - if there is Nuptial Mass]
Nuptial Blessing
Signing of the Marriage Schedule
Recessional

Two or three hymns can, if you wish, be sung at different points in the rite, such as at the beginning of the service, after the Rite of Marriage, at the Offertory or after Holy Communion in a Nuptial Mass, or at the end of the service. Music, played on the organ or sung, may also be used to good effect at the entrance of the bride, during the signing of the Marriage Schedule, to accompany the recessional, and at other appropriate points during the service. In a Nuptial Mass, parts of the Mass such as the Gloria, Sanctus and Agnus Dei may also be sung.

The priest with whom you are in contact at the Cathedral will be pleased to explain anything that is not clear and to give any further advice that you may need.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

The Church has selected the following appropriate readings to be considered in a Marriage liturgy. The first reading and Psalm are presented as pairs, these are merely suggestions and any other suitable pairing may be used. At least one reading which refers specifically to marriage (marked *) must be chosen

FIRST READING (OLD TESTAMENT) & PSALM

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|---|--|--|
| 1 | Genesis 1:26-28.31 *
<i>God created man in the image of himself... be fruitful, multiply</i> | Psalm 32:12. 18. 20-22 R: v.5
<i>The Lord fills the earth with his love</i> |
| 2 | Genesis 2:18-24 *
<i>It is not good that man should be alone... they become one body</i> | Psalm 148: 1-4. 9-14 R: v.12
<i>Praise the name of the Lord</i> |
| 3 | Genesis 24:48-51. 58-67 *
<i>Isaac loved Rebekah, and so he was consoled at the loss of his mother</i> | Psalm 144:8-10. 15. 17-18 R: v.9
<i>How good is the Lord to all</i> |
| 4 | Tobit 7: 6-14 *
<i>The Lord of heaven favour you tonight my child, and grant you his grace and peace)</i> | Psalm 32:12.18.20-22 R: v.5
<i>The Lord fills the earth with his love</i> |
| 5 | Tobit 8:4-8 *
<i>Prayer of Tobias and Sarah – bring us to old age together</i> | Psalm 102:1-2. 8. 13. 17-18 R: v.8 or v.17
<i>The Lord is compassion and love
The love of the Lord is everlasting upon those who hold him in fear</i> |
| 6 | Songs of Songs 2:8-10.14. 16; 8:6-7
<i>My beloved is mine and I am his</i> | Psalm 127: 1-5 R: v.1 or v.4
<i>O blessed are those who fear the Lord)
Indeed thus shall be blessed the man who fears the Lord</i> |
| 7 | Ecclesiasticus 26:1-4. 13-16 *
<i>Like the sun rising is the beauty of a good wife</i> | Psalm 33:2-9 R: v.2 or v.9
<i>I will bless the Lord at all times
Taste and see that the Lord is good</i> |
| 8 | Jeremiah 31:31-34
<i>Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts</i> | Psalm 111:1-9 R: v.1
<i>Happy the man who delights in the Lord's commands</i> |

It is appropriate to use the following in the Easter season

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|---|---|--|
| 9 | Apocalypse 19:1. 5-9
<i>Happy are those invited to the wedding
feast of the Lamb</i> | Psalm 148: 1-4. 9-14 R: v.12
<i>Praise the name of the Lord</i> |
|---|---|--|

SECOND READING (NEW TESTAMENT)

- 1 Romans 8:31-35. 37-39
With God on our side who can be against us?
- 2 Romans 12:1-2. 9-13 or 12:1-2. 9-18
Do not let your love be a pretence
- 3 Corinthians 6:13-15. 17-20
Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit
- 4 Corinthians 12:31-13:8
Love is always patient and kind
- 5 Ephesians 5:2. 21-33 or 5:2. 25-32 *
Follow Christ by loving as he loved you
- 6 Colossians 3:12-17
You are God's chosen race... he loves you
- 7 I Peter 3:1-9 *
Wives should be obedient to their husbands... husbands must treat their wives with consideration
- 8 I John 3:18-24
Our love is to be something real and active
- 9 I John 4:7-12
Let us love one another as love comes from God

GOSPEL

- 1 Matthew 5:1-12
The beatitudes – Rejoice and be glad for your reward will be great in heaven
- 2 Matthew 5:13-16
You are the light of the world
- 3 Matthew 7:21. 24-25 / 7:21. 24-29
The sensible man built his house on rock
- 4 Matthew 19:3-6 *
What God has united man must not divide
- 5 Matthew 22:35-40
The greatest commandment: love the Lord your God and your neighbour
- 6 Mark 10:6-9 *
They are no longer two but one body
- 7 John 2:1-11 *
The wedding at Cana
- 8 John 15:9-12
Remain in my love
- 9 John 15:12-16
This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you
- 10 John 17:20-23 or 17:20-26
May they be completely one

PRINTING ORDERS OF SERVICE

If you plan to produce an order of service, it is a good idea to arrange for the printing of sufficient copies for yourselves, your guests, the priest and the musicians, plus a few spares. A proof copy must be provided to the Cathedral Chaplain who is assisting you for his approval before the order of service is printed.

Particularly if some of your guests may not be familiar with Catholic worship, it is important to make sure that everything the congregation is expected to say or sing is printed in the order of service. Though the Cathedral is not able to arrange the typesetting and printing of orders of service, the priest conducting your wedding will be able to offer advice on these matters.

For a Nuptial Mass, we recommend that you include some guidance about what the congregation should do at the time of Holy Communion. The suggested form of wording is: 'If you are not a Roman Catholic or are a Catholic not wishing to receive Holy Communion, you are invited to come forward to receive a blessing. Crossing your arms over your chest will indicate this to the priest.'

CHECK-LIST FOR YOUR WEDDING MASS OR SERVICE

- Date and time of the wedding booked
- Date and time of the wedding confirmed
- All fees and charges paid
- Wedding rehearsal arranged - date and time confirmed
- Readings chosen
- Readers invited
- Bidding Prayers selected
- All texts agreed by the priest
- Music selected (optional)
- Music selection confirmed by the priest and musicians
- Order of Service complete and proof read by the priest
- Order of Service printed
- Two witnesses for signing the Marriage Schedule chosen
- Flowers chosen (optional)
- Video recording booked (optional)

WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL HALL

With its excellent situation in central London, the Cathedral Hall is a popular venue for many functions.

TYPES OF FUNCTION

- Reception – Formal dinner for 200
- Cocktail reception for 300

FACILITIES AVAILABLE

- Raised stage with pull-out steps from hall floor.
- Chandeliers with up/down lighting.
- Kitchen and refectory area.
- Equipment – folding and rigid laminated tables in various sizes, chairs. It is also possible to arrange the separate hire of banqueting furniture.
- Public Address – Sound room, balanced PA system with CD player. Audio recording capability through the system.
- Disabled facilities – Level access for disabled persons via the side entrance, through Choir School main gates. Loop system (set hearing aids to 'T' position). Toilets accessible to wheelchair users.

HIRE RATES

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| ▫ Minimum charge (4 hours) | £900 |
| ▫ Each hour thereafter | £150 |
| ▫ Security/Door management | £20 per hour |
| ▫ Catering | <i>by arrangement</i> |

Please ensure that the hours booked are adequate to cover the arrival and dispersal of both the participants and any equipment.

HOW TO FIND US

The main entrance to the Cathedral Hall is on Ambrosden Avenue, SW1P 1QH, which is accessed from Victoria Street or Francis Street.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information on the Hall please contact the Cathedral Manager on 020 7798 9096 or e-mail chreception@rcdow.org.uk.

January 2026

www.westminstercathedral.org.uk