

Galway Cathedral



The Celebration of Marriage: Information & Requirements

Congratulations to you both on your engagement, and on your commitment to entering into the lifelong sacrament of Christian marriage.

Church marriage is a serious and solemn undertaking, and carries with it its own set of requirements which are distinct from the civil requirements. These are outlined below, and you should allow yourselves plenty of time for their fulfilment; it can sometimes take a considerable amount of time to obtain all the necessary paperwork.

General Considerations

To request that your wedding take place in Galway Cathedral, please fill out the form *Request for the Celebration of Marriage* and return it to the Cathedral Office, having read in full the requirements and guidelines below.

Couples may marry within a celebration of mass, or they may have a wedding service without mass. The celebration of mass which includes the wedding ceremony is traditional in Ireland, but a wedding service without mass can often be more appropriate if one party is not Roman Catholic, or for other sincere spiritual reasons. Please discuss this with your priest if you need help in making the right choice.

Please note that the Cathedral is not in any sense commercially rented or leased to you, nor is the Cathedral under any contractual obligation; rather, you and your family and friends are guests within the sacred space of Galway Cathedral.

Galway Cathedral is not available for weddings on Sundays.

Church Requirements

Documentation

Each of you must furnish the following documents in good time before the wedding:

- ◆ A Certificate of Baptism, obtained from the church in which you were baptised. This must be obtained no sooner than six months before the date of the wedding.
- ◆ A Certificate of Confirmation, obtained from the church in which you were confirmed. This must be obtained no sooner than six months before the date of the wedding.
- ◆ A declaration that you are free to marry, in one of the following forms:
 - A letter of freedom to marry from each parish in which you have lived for more than six months after the age of 16.
 - A sworn affidavit confirming that you are free to marry.
 - A formal declaration from a family member, signed by a priest, that you are free to marry: the appropriate form is available from the Cathedral website.
- ◆ A pre-nuptial enquiry form, obtained from and completed with the priest of the parish in which you live.
- ◆ A certificate of attendance at a pre-marriage course. Please note that courses run by commercial agencies are not recognised in the Diocese of Galway; only the following course providers are acceptable:
 - Accord, Áras de Brún, Newtownsmith, Galway (091-562331, www.accord.ie)
 - Esker Retreat House, Athenry (091-844549, www.redemptoristsesker.ie)
 - Nazareth Family Institute, Dublin (01-2896647, www.nazarethfamilyinstitute.net)
- ◆ Dispensations may be needed (for example, in the case where one of you is not Roman Catholic); your parish priest will see to these.
- ◆ Written permission from your parish priest for the marriage to take place outside his parish (only required if the Cathedral is not your parish).
- ◆ In the event of a previous union, either annulment documents or a death certificate for the previous spouse.

Meeting

We ask that the couple meet with one of the priests of the Cathedral; this is a prerequisite to confirming a date for your wedding. This meeting can be arranged through the Cathedral Office (091-563577).

Fee

The appropriate fee, for the use of the church, is payable to the Cathedral Office; your booking is not confirmed until this has been received. The fee is non-refundable if you cancel the wedding within six months of the date.

Civil Requirements

Please note the following requirements under law:

- ◆ You must attend, by appointment, at the office of the Registrar and give at least three months' notice of your intention to marry. The local Registrar of Marriages is at 25 Newcastle Road, Galway (091–546277).
- ◆ The officiating priest or deacon must be on the Registrar's list of solemnisers, which is on the General Register Office website at www.groireland.ie in the "Getting Married" section.

The Registrar will issue you with a Marriage Registration Form, which you should bring to the Cathedral. Full details on getting married under civil law are available on the General Register Office website as above.

Practical Considerations

To avoid difficulty and unnecessary stress on the day of your wedding, please read the following points carefully: you will be asked on the marriage request form to declare that you have read and agree to abide by them. If you have engaged a wedding planner, they must discuss arrangements with the Cathedral in good time.

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| Rehearsal | A rehearsal for the ceremony is recommended, as it allows you to get familiar with the ceremony in advance. Wedding rehearsals in the Cathedral take place by arrangement at 4:30pm or 5:00pm, most often on the day before the actual wedding. |
| Punctuality | The ceremony should begin on time! While it might be fashionable for a bride to be a little late, an excessive delay (fifteen minutes or more) causes severe disruption to the Cathedral and to other activities taking place there. |
| Readings | Readings are taken from sacred scripture; your priest will help you choose, and books with suitable readings are available in the Cathedral Bookshop (091–531433). Readings play an important role in the liturgy, and so must not be replaced with secular reflections or poetry. |
| Music | In accordance with the dignity of both the Cathedral and your wedding ceremony, only sacred music, hymns and psalms are appropriate, as well as suitably dignified classical music. Secular songs are not permitted in the liturgy. The Director of Music is available to advise on your choices of music (music@galwaycathedral.ie). |
| Photos & video | You are welcome to take a photographic and/or video record of this very special day in your life together. Please ensure that your photographer respects the sacred setting of the sanctuary, and that he/she does not delay the ceremony or distract your guests from their prayers. Access to the organ gallery is not permitted. |
| Flowers | You are welcome to provide floral arrangements for the altar. We appreciate it when some of these flowers are left on the altar after the ceremony, as a token of your appreciation of the beautiful space in which you have got married. The Cathedral reserves the right to refuse displays which may be inappropriate; please have your florist check with the Cathedral in advance. |
| Parking | Limited parking is available within the grounds of the Cathedral. |
| Candles | For safety and insurance reasons, lighted candles are strictly forbidden in the body of the church. |
| Confetti & petals | The use of confetti and petals is strictly forbidden, both inside and outside the Cathedral. |
| Furniture | The Cathedral furniture, both in the sanctuary and in the body of the church, may not be moved. |

Data Protection

The information which you provide to us is retained indefinitely and securely in the Cathedral Office as a record of your marriage.

Certain particulars are given to (i) the parishes in which you were baptised and (ii) the General Register Office, in the normal course of registration of your marriage by both Church and state.

Congratulations once again to you both on your engagement – may we wish you every happiness in the years ahead as you plan life together.