

Getting Married in the Catholic Church: A Step-by-Step Guide



If you're reading this, congratulations! You're preparing for one of life's most beautiful commitments—marriage. In the Catholic Church, marriage is not only a natural union but also a Sacrament, a sacred bond blessed by God when two baptised Christians marry.

This guide outlines everything you need to know to ensure your wedding meets the Church's requirements, from paperwork and fees to ceremony planning.

Requirements for a Catholic Wedding

To marry in the Catholic Church, the following conditions must be met:

- ✓ At least one of you must be a baptised Catholic. (In the UK, it is recommended that you have also been Confirmed and received First Holy Communion. In some countries, Confirmation is required.)
- ✓ You must both be free to marry (i.e., not bound by a previous marriage).
- ✓ You must enter marriage freely and without coercion.
- ✓ At least one of you should live within the parish boundary.

Required Documents




Required Document	Details
Baptism Certificate	Must be issued within six months of the wedding. <i>(Not required for non-Christians.)</i>
Confirmation Certificate	<i>(Not required for non-Catholics.)</i>
Statutory Declaration of Freedom	A legally binding declaration stating you have never been married before, completed with a Commissioner for Oaths or Solicitor . <i>(Forms available from the parish.)</i>
Pre-Marriage Course Certificate	Must be completed before the wedding .
Pre-Nuptial Enquiry Form	Completed in the presence of a priest .

◆ For weddings in the UK:

- Couples must obtain a **Marriage Schedule** from their local Register Office and give it to the Authorised Person at the church.
- After the wedding, the Authorised Person returns it to the Register Office, which then issues the official marriage certificate.



Marriage Paperwork Fees

Fee Type	Amount	Details
 Standard Parish Donation	£50	For couples who do not require a dispensation from the Chancery Office.
 Dispensation Fee	£100	Required for marriages involving a non-Catholic or taking place outside the UK .
Breakdown of Dispensation Fee		£50 – Chancery Office £50 – Parish (covers permissions & administrative costs)
 Payment Options		Payments can be made by cheque (payable to WRC DT Isleworth) or cash to the parish. A receipt will be provided.

Marriage Preparation Course

All couples must complete a marriage preparation course approved by the Catholic Church. These are offered by various parishes and online providers:

 [Marriage Care](#)

 [SmartLoving](#)





 **Important Reminder** ⚠️

Do not book a wedding or reception until you have spoken with your parish priest.

All arrangements remain provisional until the necessary paperwork and permissions are in place.

Situation	Requirements & Important Notes
If Either of You Has Been Married Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If either partner was previously married (in a church, register office, civil partnership, or customary marriage), the marriage must be reviewed by the Church before proceeding. - Until approval is given, all arrangements remain provisional, and no bookings should be made.
Marriage Between a Catholic and a Non-Catholic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Permission from the Archbishop is required. - The couple must agree that any children from the marriage will be baptised and raised in the Catholic faith.
Getting Married in a Catholic Church Abroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The same procedures apply, but the process may take longer. - Some countries may require additional documents.

 **Additional Documents for Overseas Weddings:**

Country	Required Documents
 France	- Birth certificates for all parties (French nationals must provide an up-to-date copy). - Declaration of Intention (samples available upon request).
 Hong Kong	- Copies of birth certificates.
 Ireland	- If you are asked to celebrate a marriage in Ireland, you must be added to the Temporary Solemnisers' Register (Forms available from some Irish dioceses; requirements vary). - DISPARITY OF CULT cases only : An authenticated copy of the birth certificate of the unbaptised party is required. - The Diocese of Tuam strictly enforces this rule following Irish Hierarchy guidelines, though not all Irish dioceses follow suit.
 Spain	- Copies of birth certificates and passports for all parties.



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Planning Your Wedding Ceremony


Once your paperwork is complete and you've finished the marriage preparation course, you will meet with the priest to plan your wedding ceremony.

Wedding Ceremony Options	Details
 Nuptial Mass	A full Catholic Mass that includes the exchange of vows.
 Wedding Service	A shorter liturgy with prayers, readings, and vows, but without a full Mass.

Other Considerations

 Readers for Scripture and prayers

 Music selections

 Flowers (It is customary to leave wedding flowers in the church after the ceremony.)

 Photography arrangements

Wedding Fees

Many couples ask about appropriate donations. Below are suggested amounts:

Category	Suggested Amount	Payment Instructions
 Church Donation	£200	Place in an envelope labeled "Church Donation"
 Priest/Deacon Donation	£150	Place in an envelope labeled "Priest/Deacon's Donation"
 Parish Registrar Fee	£60	Place in an envelope labeled "Parish Registrar"
Payment Method	Cash or Cheque	Hand to the Priest or Parish Administrator at the rehearsal or earlier

Additional Costs



Flowers – Arranged with your florist.



Music – Arranged with your musicians.



Photography – Arranged with your photographer.

What's Next?

We hope this guide has been helpful! If you have questions or wish to begin marriage preparation, please contact:



Fr Nico – nloboratu@rcdow.org.uk



Parish Office: 020 8560 1431



isleworth@rcdow.org.uk



Good luck, and may God bless your marriage!



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