

PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Guidelines for the Sacrament

The Catholic Parish of Willetton wants to offer you the best we can as you prepare for the beautiful vocation of Marriage. We want you to encounter the Lord in this Sacrament. We believe He will come to you in the faith of our parish community, in the love of a married couple, and in the Father's gift of priesthood. Many other people, especially your parents, will have prepared you for your big day. Our part is to put some finishing touches. Much of the life of any parish centres round the reception of the Sacraments. They are sure ways to encounter Christ. How individuals experience the various Sacraments depends to a large extent on how well they prepare to receive them.

These guidelines are drawn up, in consultation with groups and parishioners, for the benefit of people wishing to celebrate the Sacrament in our parish of Willetton. We hope they will enable parishioners to enter more fully into the Sacramental life of the parish by clearly outlining our approach and the programmes we offer. We hope couples will see the programmes offered as an integral part of their Marriage preparations, which will help them as they begin their life together as partners in a Christian Marriage. We sincerely invite you to enter fully into this final time of preparation.

A Parish Welcomes Engaged Couples

Love and Marriage are two of God's most beautiful gifts to us. If your love is so strong that you have made a commitment to marriage, then we, as a parish family, welcome you both to celebrate your wedding with us in our parish church. We believe Marriage to be a covenant based on mutual love and faith in each other - a commitment for life and blessed by God. Believing these things, it is important for you to prepare as well as possible for your big day, and to know clearly the details you need to arrange. The purpose of this letter is to help the preparation run smoothly and to make sure the main issues are discussed.

SOME PRACTICAL POINTS

Notice of Marriage

Twelve month's notice to the parish of an intended marriage would be ideal. A minimum of six months is required. The State requires one month and one day formal "**Notice of Intended Marriage**".

See your priest immediately. As soon as you have made a commitment to marry, you should approach the priest who is to help you celebrate your marriage. Priests outside the parish are always welcome to Saints John & Paul. Who the celebrant will be needs to be known before a firm Church booking can be made. Contact the Parish Office (9332 5992) and have details of the marriage entered into the parish diary. Among the details to be entered would be if the marriage ceremony were to be celebrated within Mass or not. It is difficult to celebrate weddings on Sunday in our parish because of Mass and Baptism commitments.

Preparation for Marriage

The Church requires preparation. Early notice of marriage enables couples to go through this preparation in a relaxed way before attention is absorbed by the details of the wedding day. The Catholic Church sees marriage as a life-long union between husband and wife. It stands to reason that, where such a step is being considered, proper preparation takes place beforehand. The preparation offered will touch on all aspects of married life. Couples contemplating marriage are asked to be part of:

- An Engaged Encounter Weekend or
- Parish Couple Marriage Program (5weeks) or
- Marriage Preparation (a day session) and
- Four follow-up sessions with the celebrant.

Each of these sessions complements the other and gives each couple a foundation for married life.

Booklets

Booklets, setting out the marriage ceremony, should be prepared by the couple. Father will be ready to help with these. These booklets help all present at the wedding to take a more active part. The production of the book is the responsibility of the couple.

Place of Marriage

The normal place for a celebration of marriage in the case of a Catholic, couple is in the parish of either couple. In the case of a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic, the usual place would be the parish of the Catholic party.

Certificates required

The couple will be expected to provide the celebrant with:

- Birth Certificates (full Birth Extracts, if not born in Australia; Passport or Citizenship Certificate).
- Change of Name (if applicable).
- Baptismal Certificates (issue should be within 6 months of the date of marriage).
- If divorced, **Marriage Certificates** and **Decree Absolute** will be required.
- If Widowed, Death Certificate will be required.

Permission/Dispensation

A marriage can take place in the Church between a Catholic Person baptised in another faith, or a Catholic person and a person never baptised. In these cases permission or a dispensation for the marriage to take place is given by the Bishop. The Application for this permission or dispensation is made by the Catholic party. In making the application the Catholic party is required to:

- Reaffirm their faith in Jesus Christ.
- Express their intention to live that faith in the Catholic Church.
- To do all in their power to share their faith with their children by having them baptised and brought up in the Catholic Church.

It is taken for granted that a couple has discussed these matters in detail prior to making arrangements for marriage in the Church. Should there be aspects you wish to discuss further, you are invited to do so with the celebrant or some other priest.

Conditions for use of the Church

- A booking fee for the Church of \$300.00 is to be paid via direct debit (BSB 086-006; Account #666086963; Account Name: Willetton Catholic Parish; Reference Couple's Names), soon after the booking. Until this is paid the booking is tentative.
- Costs involved are generally by way of offering. An offering is also made to the organist and musicians. Please ask them about this. The cost of materials used in your preparation programme will be kept to a minimum.
- A separate offering should be made to the celebrant.
- The Church is not available for weddings on Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Christmas Day, and Solemnities of the Church (Please check with the Priest).
- The latest time for a wedding on Saturday or Sunday is 4.00pm.

Music

Music for your wedding is an important part of the Church ceremony and needs to be arranged in consultation with the celebrant. Musicians and singers from outside the parish are welcome. If you need assistance from the parish and singers, approach them directly after our Sunday Masses or contact John Richards (0417 933 470). The music and songs chosen should always be suitable to the occasion. Payments should be arranged between the couple and musicians and singers.

Copyright licences may need to be applied also.

Flowers

Flower arrangements are in your hands. You may ask a friend to arrange your flowers using Church vases or a florist may bring them to the Church already arranged. If the wedding is celebrated on Saturday, then some flowers are to be left in the Church for the weekend. During Lent and Advent, however, floral arrangements should be removed after the wedding.

Liturgical/Seasonal Decorations

Throughout the year the Church is 'dressed' for the liturgical seasons. Any banners, etc. hanging in the Church must not be removed for weddings.

Confetti

Please advise your relatives and friends that confetti in or around the Church **is not permitted** because of the mess and the difficulty of cleaning it from the paving.

Photographs/Videos

Photographs and videos are permitted during the marriage ceremony. However, it is important for them to be taken discreetly and not be a distraction. This applies especially to the use of bright lights.

The Church makes these requests of you because she cares about you and your marriage and the quality of your relationship. We look forward to helping you in whatever way we can in your preparation for this important vocation of marriage.

*FR THAI VU,
PARISH PRIEST*