

**Bracknell Parish**  
**St Joseph & St Margaret Clitherow**

Parish Priest: Fr. Danny McAvoy

Stanley Walk

Town Centre

BRACKNELL

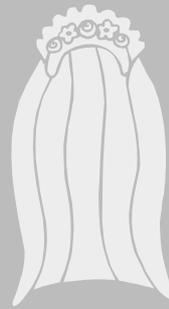
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# Marriage in The Catholic Church



## Introduction

For Roman Catholics, Marriage is a sacrament, a sacred sign of God's love for us all, and the way to celebrate the union of a man and a woman in the context of that love. The Church will do everything possible to help the couple gain every grace and blessing from the sacrament, both during the time of preparation, and afterwards. What follows is a simple outline of the practical necessities if you are to be married within the Catholic Church.

## Guidelines

- One of you must have been baptised as a Catholic and both of you must be able to show that neither of you has ever been married before.
- See your parish priest. You must do this at least six months before the date when the wedding is due to take place. The priest will want to meet both partners, or, if one of you is living some distance away, he will ask that partner to make contact with a Catholic priest in the locality where he or she is currently living.
- The priest will ask for information from you, and will note it down in a special form. In particular, he will want to know where you were baptised, and he will, in due course, need a certificate of your baptism.
- If one partner has never been baptised, the priest will need to know this, so that the necessary dispensation can be sought from the Bishop.
- If one partner is not Roman Catholic, the Catholic partner will be asked to promise to keep to his or her Catholic faith and to do everything he or she can to ensure that any children are baptised and brought up as Catholics. However, it will be emphasised that your shared belief, if both of you are Christians, will be a great blessing for your marriage.
- Before you finalise a date for the wedding, you must give notice to the civil Registrar of Marriages in the district where the church in which you wish to be married is located. The Registrar will inform you of the requirements of civil law, which must be fulfilled before you marriage can take place in a Catholic church. The priest or deacon cannot proceed with the marriage unless he has written confirmation from the Registrar that these requirements have been fulfilled. ***Please note that it is the couple's responsibility to give notice to the Registrar and to obtain the necessary licences to marry. Without the appropriate licences, the marriage ceremony cannot take place.***
- The Church requires that you both take part in a course of preparation before you enter into marriage and the priest will inform you of what arrangements can be made for this. You will also have the opportunity in further visits to discuss with the priest or deacon, arrangements for the wedding service. Your own input into the planning of the celebration will be very welcome.

## SOME QUESTIONS YOU MAY ASK

### ***What if I have been married before?***

You can only marry in a Catholic church if there is no existing marriage bond. Civil divorce is not sufficient to make it possible for you to marry in our Church. It does sometimes happen that someone who have been through a form of marriage is able to have that marriage declared null by the Church, which means that the former marriage is judged not to have met the Church's requirements for marriage in the first place. To establish this is likely to involve a long drawn-out process, whose outcome cannot be certain until the case has been examined by appropriate Church authority. No priest or deacon of the Catholic Church is able to authorise a second marriage in Church unless the former marriage is declared by competent Church authority to be null or not now existing. If you are faced with such a situation, the priest or deacon can be expected to listen to you in a sensitive and understanding way, even though he may be unable to officiate at your wedding.

### ***What are the "banns"?***

They relate to the previous question. The banns are an official announcement in the church of your intention to marry. They give the opportunity for anyone, on hearing or reading the announcement, who is aware of an impediment to the marriage, to say so. It is not our custom to read the banns, as the enquiries we make before the marriage takes place should suffice to establish that a couple are free to marry in church.

### ***How is the music arranged?***

If you wish to have the organ played, the priest or deacon will help you to find an organist. The choice of music and hymns will be to be agreed between you, the organist and the priest or deacon who conducts the ceremony.

### ***What will it cost?***

You are asked to contribute £200 to the church, payable before the wedding. Additionally, at your own discretion and payable before the wedding, you are asked to give a donation to the priest or deacon who is to conduct the ceremony. This is to cover his time and any administrative costs involved in preparing for the ceremony, and forms part of his annual income. A fee of £50 is also payable to the Registrar in advance. The cost for the church organist, if you are having one is £75.

### ***What about flowers?***

You may make arrangements with the church florist or other chosen florist, but please remember that there are usually flowers in the church at weekends, except during the seasons of Advent and Lent.

### ***Any photographs or video?***

You may use an official approved photographer, who should check with the priest or deacon on how he or she can proceed. In the case of video, you should also make sure that the organist has no objection, because of the requirements arising from performing rights.

## SCALE OF CHARGES

<u>Item</u>	<u>Charge</u>
Church Fee	£200
Priest Fee	Discretionary
Registrar	£50
Organist	£75
Flowers	To be agreed