

The Catholic Parishes of Maesteg & Aberkenfig

The Presbytery
Monica Street
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Preparing for Marriage

First of all the Catholic community of Maesteg & Aberkenfig would like to offer its congratulations to you on your engagement. There are many things to think about when planning your special day, this leaflet is intended to help you tick all the boxes when preparing for a marriage within the Catholic Church.

The first important decision is deciding the date of your wedding. When this is done, before you make any other arrangements, you should immediately contact the parish office and Bridgend Registry Office to check if this date is possible. Once both the church and the Registrar confirm availability then you should start to think about other arrangements.

BEFORE THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY

To marry within one of our parishes we require **AT LEAST 12 MONTHS** notice. On making contact with the parish, the parish priest will make arrangements for an initial meeting. The date and time of the service will not be booked until the initial meeting has taken place to ensure there are no issues that may prolong the date. He will then meet with you on a number of occasions in advance of your wedding to check-in and see how things are going. During these meetings he will also discuss the following points with you:-

- why you want a Catholic Church wedding.
- what is special about a Christian marriage.
- the importance of prayer.
- to plan and discuss the format of the Nuptial Mass or Service.

IF YOU OR YOUR FIANCÉE HAVE EVER BEEN MARRIED BEFORE

You **MUST** speak with the parish priest as soon as possible to establish if it is possible for you to celebrate your Wedding in the Catholic Church. This applies whether your previous Marriage was conducted in a church or not. No other arrangements should be made until the advice of the parish priest has been sought.

IF YOU LIVE OUTSIDE THE PARISH

If you live outside the boundaries of the parishes of Our Lady & St. Patrick's, Maesteg and St. Robert of Newminster, Aberkenfig you will need written permission from your own parish priest. He will prepare with you the necessary paperwork for the Wedding.

WHAT IF MY FIANCÉE IS NOT A CATHOLIC?

A non-Catholic who is either baptised or not is very welcome to marry a baptised Catholic in the Catholic Church.

They are also welcome to invite their Vicar/Minister to play a part in the Wedding Ceremony.

If you wish to marry your non-Catholic partner in their church/chapel, you require a Special Dispensation that can only be granted by the local bishop. Please speak to the priest/deacon about this.

IN ADDITION SPEAKING WITH US YOU WILL ALSO NEED TO:

1) Make an appointment with the Registrar

You are required by civil law to register your intended wedding at *Bridgend Registry Office at Ty'r Ardd Sunnyside Bridgend CF31 4AR*. If either of you live in separate districts the registrars of both districts must be informed to issue the appropriate certificates.

The Registrar appointed for your wedding will bring these certificates to the church on the day of the wedding. The Registrar will charge a fee. To book an appointment with the Registrar to register your intent to marry call (01656) 642391. No marriage can take place without the registrar.

2) Undertake a marriage preparation course.

The preparation course is run by **Mrs Maria Cahalane** [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] *Please book early as it can be difficult to find a place at short notice.*

DOCUMENTS YOU WILL NEED TO OBTAIN FOR THE CHURCH

For the Catholic party(ies):-

- a recent (i.e. dated within six months of the wedding) copy of your baptism certificate from the church where you were baptised. This certificate should give details of confirmation and should also state that there is no record of any previous marriage having taken place.

- a written declaration (Letter of Freedom) from each parish you have lived in for more than six months since the age of 16.

For the non-Catholic party:-

- If they are a baptised Christian, a copy of their baptism certificate (date does not matter).
- A letter from the parents, or another knowledgeable source, positively confirming that s/he has never been married (or, where relevant giving details of any previous marriage - civil or religious)

FLOWERS

Flowers are of course permitted in the church. Access to the church to deliver the flowers must be pre-arranged with the parish priest.

ORGANIST

The parish organist in Maesteg is **Mr. Paul Woods**, you can contact him directly to check availability. [REDACTED] The fee is usually £60. For Aberkenfig please speak with the parish priest.

PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEO

The celebrating priest/deacon will advise the photographer or video operator on what they can or cannot do; the video operator will need to have a license to record the hymns.

CONFETTI

Is strictly forbidden inside the Church. We also ask guests to limit the use of confetti on the grounds to the BIO-DEGRADABLE as other types can cause drainage problems.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

When you register the intended wedding you will be required to pay a set fee for listing the intended marriage, you will also be required to pay the Registrar a set fee.

Registrar: £50.00 (correct at time of publication)

Organist: £60.00

Church: The Church does not charge a set fee but asks for a donation due to costs incurred for administration, heating, lighting and upkeep of the church. It is also customary to make a donation to the priest/deacon.

If there are any concerns please do not hesitate to discuss them with us.

The Mystery of Marriage

The Church honours and treasures the married love between husband and wife. For Christians marriage mirrors the relationship between Christ and the Church. Thus married love was described by St. Paul as a "great mystery" (Ephesians 5.32) and came to be recognised as one of the sacraments.

Marriage like other vocations calls us to reflect God's love to the world in a particular way. Married people in their exclusive and life long commitment to each other witness to and draw strength from how Christ has loved us.

The wedding vows that couples exchange express what is at the heart of Christian marriage. The words "for better or for worse" point to the truth that life together will have its challenges as well as its rewards. The grace of the sacrament inspires couples to turn to the Lord not just in days of happiness but also in times of sorrow to seek the strength to transform any situation with love and indeed forgiveness. It is important to state that while upholding the value of perseverance and the hope of reconciliation, the Church does not demand that anyone remain in a situation that has become impossible.

In the Catholic tradition, marriage requires a willingness on behalf of the couple to welcome the children with whom they may be blessed. At the same time, the church holds that married life is fruitful and life-giving of itself..

Marriage is a profound commitment. It is a commitment that each party must chose freely, giving their full consent without reservation. For this reason appropriate preparation is essential both at a personal level and in regard to establishing that all is in order for the marriage to proceed happily and joyfully.

In becoming husband and wife you give yourselves to each other for life. You promise to be true and faithful, to support and cherish each other until death, so that your years together will be the living out in love of the pledge you now make. May your love for each other reflect the enduring love of Christ for his Church.

CHECKLIST – HAVE YOU:

Registered the marriage at the Registry Office?

Booked marriage preparation course?

Obtained Baptism Certificates and Letters of Freedom?

Given the documents to the Priest/Deacon?

Contacted the Organist?

Made provision for payments?

Made provision for a rehearsal?