

ST PETER'S CHURCH WOOLWICH



INFORMATION FOR MARRIAGE



Enquiries about marriage in our parish are always directed to one of our priests. Engagement is a grace filled time, and the priest will help you with your preparations for marriage. This booklet is designed to assist those preparations.

CONTACT DETAILS:

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Parish Priest – Fr Michael Branch

Assistant Priest - Fr Anthony Uche

Assistant Priest – Fr Graziano de Palma

1. Introduction

Marriage is a Sacrament of the Church given by God and the decision to marry is one of the most important choices of anyone's life.

The Church teaches that marriage is a life-long partnership between one man and one woman, established by God and ordered to the well-being of the spouses and to the procreation and education of children.

When asking to be married in the Catholic Church you are accepting the Christian and Catholic understanding of marriage.

- Marriage is an exclusive and indissoluble union;
- Spouses have an obligation to one another of faithfulness, mutual love and support;
- Spouses must be open to the possibility that God will bless their marriage with children.

A marriage is formed when a man and woman freely and irrevocably give and accept one another as husband and wife, according to the rites and laws of the Church. God joins the spouses together in an irrevocable covenant, and gives them His grace to help them love one another and be open to the possibility of having a family.

1.1 Notice for Marriage

Due to the life-long significance and gravity of marriage the Church requires a minimum of **six months' notice** for a couple to marry. This gives the opportunity for you to make proper preparation for marriage, as well as allowing time for the necessary paperwork to be completed. The first step is always to speak to one of the priests of the parish.

1.2 Choosing a date

Setting a date for your wedding ceremony is always done in consultation with the priest. This is a busy parish, so it is best to do this as soon as possible. Weddings are mostly held on Saturdays in the afternoon for another day you need to consult the priest.

In some circumstances it may not be possible for a date to be set immediately. This is always the case when either partner has been through any kind of previous marriage.

The date and time of your wedding service is always provisional until all paperwork, Church and civil, is in good order.

1.3 Church Fee

The parish suggests a donation of £100 for the wedding ceremony, which includes the fee for the priest to act as civil registrar. This should be paid before your wedding either by cash or by cheque. **Cheques should be made payable to "St Peter's Church, Woolwich".**

If you are a tax-payer please remember to fill in the Gift Aid form which is on the Stand at the back of the church, as this allows the parish to claim an extra 25% from HM Revenue & Customs at no cost to yourselves.

In cases of hardship, please speak with the priest.

1.4 Marriage Preparation

Depending on your situation or circumstances marriage preparation can take a very long time, if it involves annulments, permissions and dispensation. So it is always important to start early and give yourself enough time to sort out such issues.

2. Pre-Marriage Course

A necessary part of the preparation for marriage is attendance of a pre-marriage course. There are a number of courses that run regularly throughout the diocese. There is usually a fee. An up-to-date list can be found on the diocesan website: www.rcsouthwark.org.uk/marriage_prep_courses.html. or contact the South East Area Tel: 0208 690 9310 or email them at marriagese@tiscali.co.uk Follow the links for "Marriage, Family and Life", then "Marriage Preparation".

3. Church Law Requirements

To marry in the Catholic Church both parties must demonstrate their freedom to marry.

If you have been through any kind of marriage in the past, whether civil (including civil partnership), religious, tribal, traditional or custom, it is essential that you declare this to the priest.

The priest will assist you in completing the necessary Church paperwork for marriage, and inform you what documents you must provide. These need to be original documents and not photocopies.

On the back of this booklet is a checklist to help you.

3.1 For a Catholic

- 1. Baptismal Certificate**, issued within six months of the date of the wedding. Older or original certificates cannot be accepted.
- 2. Confirmation Certificate**, if you have received the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- 3. Permission from your Parish Priest**, if you do not live within the boundaries of your parish.
- 4. Statutory Declaration of Freedom**, signed and witnessed by a Commissioner of Oaths (ie a solicitor), parents or a guardian.
- 5. Dispensation**, from Disparity of Cult or from Canonical Form
- 6. A letter of consent** if you are a minor.

3.2 For the Non-Catholic

1. **Baptismal Certificate** – if you have been baptised. For a non-Catholic there is no six month rule, so either the original certificate or a more recently obtained copy are acceptable.
2. **Statutory Declaration of Freedom**, signed and witnessed by a Commissioner of Oaths (ie a Solicitor), parents or a guardian.
3. **A letter of consent** if you are a minor.

3.3 Marrying a Non-Catholic

A Catholic who wishes to marry someone who is not a Catholic requires either permission or a dispensation from their bishop, depending on the circumstances. The priest will explain this to you.

The Catholic party is asked to sign a promise to continue living their own faith and to do all in their power to have children of the marriage baptised and brought up in the Catholic Faith. The non-Catholic partner needs to be aware of the promise, and agreeable to it.

3.4 Under 18?

If one or both of you is under 18 you must obtain a letter from your parents giving you permission to marry. The person you are to marry must be mentioned by name.

3.5 Close family or blood relationships

Permission or dispensations are required for certain intended marriages between first cousins, or other close family or blood relationships. The priest will provide more information.

3.6 Permissions and Dispensations are normally given by the Archbishop's office.

4. **Civil Law Requirements**

The Catholic Church is only permitted to celebrate marriages that are also recognised in Civil Law. At the wedding ceremony the civil Marriage Register is signed by the couple, their witnesses and the priest. The priests of the parish are recognised by the State as Authorised Persons entitled to act on behalf of the Registrar.

No marriage can take place without a Superintendent Registrar's Certificate having been issued for each party. It is your responsibility to obtain these and give them to the priest.

1. Twenty eight days' residence in the Registration District is necessary prior to giving Notice of Marriage to the Registrar.
2. Each party to the marriage must give notice of their intention to marry in person, to the Superintendent Registrar of the Registration District where they reside. A fee is payable for each notice, currently £35 per person.

3. The Superintendent Registrar can issue the Marriage Authority certificate after 15 clear days of notice has been given.

The Register Office will advise as to what identification you will need to give Notice of Marriage. Often this is a civil Birth Certificate or Passport. If you are under 23, your Birth Certificate must be produced.

4.1 GREENWICH REGISTER OFFICE

If you live in the Royal Borough of Greenwich you can make enquiries to the Royal Borough of Greenwich Register Office online:

www.royalboroughofgreenwich.gov.uk. Follow the links for "A-Z of Website" and then choose "M" for "Marriage".

Contact the Register Office
Marriages,
Woolwich Town Hall,
Wellington Street,
Woolwich SE18 6PW.

Opening Times: Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

020 8921 5015

registrar@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

4.2 NON-BRITISH CITIZENS

If you are not both British citizens you are advised to contact the relevant embassy or consulate as special rules may apply.

You can also get advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau. The Local Greenwich Citizens Advice Bureau can be contacted as follows:

Greenwich Citizens Advice Bureau
Polytechnic Street Old Town Hall, London SE18 6PN, London, SE18 6PN
Phone Number: (020) 8853 9499

5. **Marrying outside the country**

Marriages that are celebrated outside the country but prepared in the parish are usually channelled through the Archbishop's Office. The documents and marriage papers are therefore sent to the parishes where the marriage will be celebrated. **There is a DHL postage cost for the marriage papers that are sent directly to the parish. This payment must be given to the parish where the papers are being processed.**

6. **Preparing the Wedding Ceremony**

The priest will discuss all the details of the wedding ceremony with you.

6.1 NUPTIAL MASS OR WEDDING SERVICE?

Holy Mass is the source and summit of the Christian life, and it is customary for weddings to be celebrated with a Nuptial Mass. That means Mass is celebrated in the usual way, including the Eucharistic Prayer and the distribution of Holy Communion, but with the addition of the Rite of Marriage.

However, in some circumstances the priest may advise against a Nuptial Mass. For example, if one party is not Catholic and therefore unable to receive Holy Communion. In these cases, a Wedding Service is celebrated instead. In a Wedding Service there is no Eucharistic Celebration or distribution of Holy Communion.

NB: For couples if one party is not a catholic the church advises a wedding service instead of a Nuptial Mass.

6.2 FLOWERS

For most of the year a team of volunteers decorates the church with flowers.

If you wish to have special flowers in the church, you are welcome to engage a florist. We ask that any altar arrangements be left in the church after your wedding. It may also be necessary for the florist to contact the parish to arrange times of access.

During the summer it is not uncommon for the parish to have two weddings on a Saturday afternoon. In that case you may wish to arrange the flowers together with the other couple and share the costs. The priest will put you in touch with each other.

If you have flower affixed to the pew-ends please arrange to have them removed after the wedding.

During the season of Lent it is not permitted to decorate the church with flowers even at weddings.

6.3 CHOOSING READINGS

During the wedding ceremony, as at Mass, there are readings from the Scripture. Please note that only readings from Scripture are permitted in the wedding liturgy.

At the wedding there is a choice between two or three readings. The selection of readings to choose from can be found in a booklet called "Choosing the Readings" which you will find inside the green guide "Your Wedding". The priest will explain and help you to choose.

<p>FIRST READING</p>

<p>Choose one reading from</p>

Old Testament readings
or
Choose one of the
New Testament readings

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

This is usually indicated by the choice of First reading. The priest will help you get the right one. The Psalm may also be sung.

GOSPEL

Choose one of the Gospel readings.
This is always read by the Priest.

FIRST READING

Choose one reading from
Old Testament readings
or
Choose one of the
New Testament readings

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

This is usually indicated by the
choice of First reading. The priest
will help you get the right one.
The Psalm may also be sung.

GOSPEL

Choose one of the Gospel readings.
This is always read by the Priest.

FIRST READING

Choose one of the Old Testament readings

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

This is indicated by the choice of first reading. The priest will help you get the right one. The psalm may also be sung

SECOND READING

Choose one of the New Testament readings.

GOSPEL

Choose one of the Gospel readings. This is always read by the Priest.

6.4 CHOOSING HYMNS AND MUSIC

Sacred music is important in Catholic Liturgy. At most weddings there is an organist and hymns.

Please note that only "religious" hymns are permitted in Church. Secular music does not have a place in Catholic liturgy, and should be used at some other occasion.

The priest will discuss the possibilities for hymns and music with you. All music must be agreed in advance.

Parish Organist

Our parish organist is Louis Da Silva. You should contact him through the parish office as soon as possible once a date has been set for your wedding.

If you are unsure of what music you would like, Louis will be happy to advise you. You will need to agree music with him at least one month in advance of your wedding.

Hymns suggestions

These are suggestions of hymns commonly sung at weddings.

Nuptial Mass – two or three hymns are recommended.

Wedding Service – one hymn is recommended.

Organ Music during the signing of the Register

Ave Maria (Bach/Gounod)

Ave Maria (Schubert)

Organ Music for the Procession of the Bride and Groom

Wedding March

Playing CDs

Our parish does have the facility to play music CDs (**NO POP SONGS**).

6.5 **INVOLVING FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

The most important “involvement” anyone can have in the wedding liturgy is their presence and prayers. This prayerful presence, listening and responding to the liturgy is the means by which the congregation commend you and your new married life to the Lord.

There are certain elements in the Mass in which you may ask your guests to be further involved.

Reading

One or more people may be involved in reading during the wedding liturgy as follows

- First reading
- Psalm (though this is often read together with the first reading)
- Second reading (if you chose to have three readings – option 2 above)
- Bidding prayers (this may be shared between two people)

The Gospel reading is always read by the priest.

Offertory Procession

If a Nuptial Mass is celebrated, two people may be chosen to present the gifts of bread and wine. This may be the bride and groom.

Witnesses

Two official witnesses should be chosen, one to represent the bride and one to represent the groom. The witnesses will sign the civil marriage register together with the couple.

6.6 **REHEARSAL**

Please arrange the date for your wedding rehearsal with the priest. As well as the wedding couple, it is helpful for the following to attend where possible.

- Best man
- Father of the bride, or whoever is giving the bride away
- One of the bridesmaids
- One of the ushers

The rehearsal is also an opportunity for the readers you have chosen to practice their readings should they wish.

6.7 PARKING

Please ask your family and friends to park at Tesco's Car Park – right opposite the church, and ask us for a Tesco parking voucher. Please check the time limit. (Normally allowed 3 hours parking, but this could change).

6.8 Photography

Within reasonable limits this is permitted during the service by a photographer you appoint. A video camera is allowed at a fixed and agreed position in the church.

6.9 Confetti

Please inform your guests that the throwing of rice and confetti, or anything similar, is not permitted in the church or outside. Please save it for later in the day elsewhere.

6.10 Transport

The nearest station to St Peter's Church is Woolwich Arsenal Station – walking distance only 2 – 3 minutes from the station. Situated right opposite Tesco's Store.

FIRST READING FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT (Outside the Easter Season)

1. A Reading from the book of Genesis (1 :26-28.31)

God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild beasts and all the reptiles that crawl upon the earth.'

God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.

God blessed them, saying to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it. Be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and all living animals on the earth.' God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good.

The word of the Lord

Followed by Psalm 32

R: The Lord fills the earth with his love.

2. A Reading from the book of Genesis (2: 18-24)

The Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helpmate.' So from the soil the Lord God fashioned all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven. These he brought to the man to see what he would call them; each one was to bear the name the man would give it. The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild beasts. But no helpmate suitable for man was found for him. So the Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep. And while he slept, he took one of his ribs and enclosed it in flesh. The Lord God built the rib he had taken from the man into a woman, and brought her to the man. The man exclaimed: 'This at last is bone from my bones, and flesh from my flesh! This is to be called woman, for this was taken from man. , This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife, and they become one body.'

The word of the Lord

Followed by Psalm 148 with a choice of antiphon

R: Praise the name of the Lord

or

R: Alleluia!

3. A reading from the book of Genesis (24:48-51. 58-67)

Abraham's servant said to Laban, 'I blessed the Lord, God of my master Abraham, who had so graciously led me to choose the daughter of my master's brother for his son. Now tell me whether you are prepared to show kindness and goodness to my master; if not, say so and I shall know what to do.'

Laban and Bethuel replied, 'This is from the Lord; it is not in our power to say yes or no to you. Rebekah is there before you. Take her and go; and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has decreed.' They called Rebekah and asked her, 'Do you want to leave with this man?' 'I do,' she replied. Accordingly they let their sister Rebekah go, with her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. They blessed Rebekah in these words:

'Sister of ours, increase to thousands and tens of thousands! May your descendants gain possession of the gates of their enemies!' Rebekah and her servants stood up, mounted the camels, and followed the man. The servant took Rebekah and departed.

Isaac, who lived in the Negeb, had meanwhile come into the wilderness of the well of Lahai Roi. Now Isaac went walking in the fields as evening fell, and looking up saw camels approaching. And Rebekah looked up and saw Isaac. She jumped down from her camel, and asked the servant, 'Who is that man walking through the fields to meet us?'

The servant replied, 'That is my master'; then she took her veil and hid her face. The servant told Isaac the whole story, and Isaac led Rebekah into his tent and made her his wife; and he loved her. And so Isaac was consoled for the loss of his mother.

The word of the Lord

Followed by Psalm 144

R: How good is the Lord to all.

4. A reading from the book of Tobit (7:6-14)

Raguel kissed Tobias and wept. Then finding words, he said, 'Blessings on you, child! You are the son of a noble father. How sad it is that someone so virtuous and full of good deeds should have gone blind! He fell on the neck of his kinsman Tobias and wept. And his wife Edna wept for him, and so did his daughter Sarah. Raguel killed a sheep from the flock, and they gave Tobias and Raphael a warm hearted welcome. They washed and bathed and sat down to table. Then Tobias said to Raphael, 'Brother Azarias, will you ask Raguel to give me my sister Sarah?' Raguel overheard the words, and said to the young man, 'Eat and drink, and make the most of your evening; no one else has the right to take my daughter Sarah -no one but you, my brother. In any case I, for my own part, am not at liberty to give her to anyone else, since you are her next of kin. However, my boy, I must be frank with you: I have tried to find a husband for her seven times among our kinsmen, and all of them have died the first evening, on going to her room. But for the present, my boy, eat and drink; the Lord will grant you his grace and peace.' Tobias spoke out, 'I will not hear of eating and drinking till you have come to a decision about me'. Raguel answered, 'Very well. Since, as prescribed by the Book of Moses, she is given to you, heaven itself decrees she shall be yours. I shall therefore entrust your sister to you. From now you are her brother and she is your sister. She is given to you from today for ever. The Lord of heaven favour you tonight, my child, and grant you

his grace and peace. 'Raguel called for his daughter Sarah, took her by the hand and gave her to Tobias with these words, 'I entrust her to you; the law and the ruling recorded in the Book of Moses assign her to you as your wife. Take her; take her home to your father's house with a good conscience. The God of heaven grant you a good journey in peace. Then he turned to her mother and asked her to fetch him writing paper. He drew up the marriage contract, how he gave his daughter as bride to Tobias according to the ordinance in the Law of Moses. After this they began to eat and drink.

The word of the Lord

Followed by Psalm 32

R: The Lord fills the earth with his love.

5. A reading from the book of Tobit (8:4-8)

On the evening of their marriage, Tobias said to Sarah. 'You and I must pray and petition our Lord to win his grace and protection. 'They began praying for protection, and this was how he began: 'You are blessed, O God of our fathers; blessed, too, is your name for ever and ever. Let the heavens bless you and all things you have made for evermore. It was you who created Adam, you who created Eve his wife to be his help and support; and from these two the human race was born. It was you who said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; let us make him a helpmate like himself." And so I do not take my sister for any lustful motive; I do it in singleness of heart. Be kind enough to have pity on her and on me and bring us to old age together.' And together they said, 'Amen, Amen'.

The word of the Lord

Followed by Psalm 102 with a choice of antiphon

R: The Lord is compassion and love

or

R: The love of the Lord is everlasting upon those who hold him in fear.

6. A reading from the Song of Songs (2: 8-10. 14. 15; 8: 6-7)

I hear my Beloved. See how he comes leaping on the mountains, bounding over the hills'. My Beloved is like a gazelle, like a young stag. See where he stands behind our wall. He looks in at the window, he peers through the lattice. My beloved lifts up his voice, says to me, 'Come then, my love, lovely one, come". My dove, hiding in the clefts of the rock, in the coverts of the cliff, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet and your face is beautiful. My beloved is mine and I am his. Set me like a seal on your heart, like a seal on your arm. For love is strong as Death, jealousy relentless as Sheol. The flash of it is a flash of fire, a flame of the Lord himself. Love no flood can quench, no torrents drown.

The word of the Lord.

Followed by Psalm 102 with a choice of antiphon

R: O blessed are those who fear the Lord.

or

R: Indeed thus shall be blessed the man who fears the Lord.

7. A Reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus (26: 1-4. 13-16)

Happy the husband of a really good wife; the number of his days will be doubled. A perfect wife is the joy of her husband, he will live out the years of his life in peace. A good wife is the best of portions, reserved for those who fear the Lord; rich or poor, they will be glad of heart; cheerful of face, whatever the season. The grace of a wife will charm her husband, her accomplishments will make him stronger. A silent wife is a gift from the Lord, no price can be put on a well-trained character. A modest wife is a boon twice over, a chaste character cannot be weighed on scales. Like the sun rising over the mountains of the Lord, the beauty of a good wife in a well-kept house.

The word of the Lord.

Followed by Psalm 33 with a choice of antiphon

R: I will bless the Lord at all times.

Or

R: Taste and see that the Lord is good.

8. A reading from the prophet Jeremiah (31:31-34)

See, the days are coming - it is the Lord who speaks - when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, but not a covenant like the one I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. No, this is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel when those days arrive - it is the Lord who speaks. Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people. There will be no further need for neighbour to try to teach neighbour, or brother to say to brother, 'Learn to know the Lord!' No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest - it is the Lord who speaks.

The word of the Lord.

Followed by Psalm 111 with a choice of antiphon

R: Happy the man who takes delight in the Lord's commands

or

R: Alleluia!

FIRST READING FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

(In the Easter Season)

1. A reading from the book of the Apocalypse (19:1.5-9)

I, John, seemed to hear the great sound of a huge crowd in heaven, singing, 'Alleluia! Victory and glory and power to our God! , Then a voice came from the throne; it said, 'Praise our God, you servants of his and all who, great or small, revere him '. And I seemed to hear the voices of a huge crowd, like the sound of the ocean or the great roar of thunder, answering, 'Alleluia! The reign of the Lord our God Almighty has begun; let us be glad and joyful and give praise to God, because this is the time for the marriage of the Lamb. His bride ready, and she has been able to dress herself in dazzling white linen, because her linen is made of the good deeds of the saints. 'The angel said, 'Write this: Happy are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.'

The word of the Lord.

Followed by psalm 148 with a choice of antiphon:

R: Praise the name of the Lord

R: Alleluia!

SECOND READING FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans (8:31-35. 37-39)

With God on our side who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give. Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen? When God acquits, could anyone condemn? Could Christ Jesus? No! He not only died for us - he rose from the dead, and there at God's right hand he stands and pleads for us.

Nothing therefore can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried or being persecuted, or lacking, food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us.

For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord

2. A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans (12:1-2.9-18)

Think of God's mercy, my brothers, and worship him, I beg you, in a way that is worthy of thinking beings, by offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God. Do not model yourselves on the behaviour of the world around you, but let your behaviour change, modelled by your new mind. This is the only way to discover the will of God and know what is good, what it is that God wants, what is the perfect thing to do.

Do not let your love be a pretence, but sincerely prefer good to evil. Love each other as much as brothers should, and have a profound respect for each other. Work for the Lord with untiring effort and with great earnestness of spirit. If you have hope, this will make you cheerful. Do not give up if trials come; and keep on praying. If anyone is in need you must share with them; and you should make hospitality your special care. Bless those who persecute you: never curse them, bless them. Rejoice with those who rejoice and be sad with those in sorrow. Treat everyone with equal kindness; never be condescending but make real friends with the poor. Do not allow yourself to become self-satisfied. Never repay evil with evil but let everyone see that you are interested only in the highest ideals. Do all you can to live at peace with everyone.

The word of the Lord.

3. A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans (12:31-13:8)

Be ambitious for the higher gifts. And I am going to show you a way that is better than any of them. If I have all the eloquence of men or of angels, but speak without love, I am simply a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. If I have the gift of prophecy, understanding all the mysteries there are, and knowing everything, and if I have faith in all its fullness, to move mountains, but without love, then I am nothing at all. If I give away all that I possess, piece by piece, and if I even let them take my body to burn it, but am without love, it will do me no good whatever.

Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth: it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes. Love does not come to an end.

The word of the Lord.

4. A Reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians

(6: 13-15.17-20)

The body is not meant for fornication; it is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. God, who raised the Lord from the dead, will by his power raise us up too.

You know, surely, that your bodies are members making up the body of Christ. But anyone who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.

Keep away from fornication. All the other sins are committed outside the body; but to fornicate is to sin against your own body. Your body, you know, is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you since you received him from God. You are not your own property; you have been bought and paid for. That is why you should use your body for the glory of God.

The word of the Lord.

5. A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Colossians (3:12-17)

You are God's chosen race, his saints; he loves you, and you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love. And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body. Always be thankful. Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you. Teach each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom. With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God and never say or do anything except in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The word of the Lord.

6. A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians (5: 2. 21-33)

Follow Christ by loving as he loved you, giving himself up in our place.

Give way to one another in obedience to Christ. Wives should regard their husbands as they regard the Lord, since as Christ is head of the Church and saves the whole body, so is a husband the head of his wife; and as the Church submits to Christ, so should wives to their husbands, in everything.

Husbands should love their wives just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her to make her holy. He made her clean by washing her in water with a form of words, so that when he took her to himself she would be glorious, with no speck or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and faultless. In the same way, husbands must love their wives as they love their own bodies: for a man to love his wife is for him to love himself. A man never hates his own body, but he feeds it and looks after it; and that is the way Christ treats the Church, because it is his body - and we are its living parts. For this reason, a man must leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one body. This mystery has many implications; but I am saying it applies to Christ and the Church. To sum up; you too, each one of you, must love his wife as he loves himself; and let every wife respect her husband.

The word of the Lord.

7. A Reading from the first letter of St. Peter (3: 1-9)

Wives should be obedient to their husbands. Then, if there are some husbands who have not yet obeyed the word, they may find themselves won over, without a word spoken, by the way their wives behave, when they see how faithful and conscientious they are. Do not dress up for show: doing up your hair, wearing gold bracelets and fine clothes; all this should be inside, in a person's heart, imperishable: the ornament of a sweet and gentle disposition - this is. what is precious in the sight of God. That was how the holy women of the past dressed themselves attractively - they hoped in God and were tender and obedient to their husbands; like Sarah, who was obedient to Abraham, and called him her lord. You are now her children, as long as you live good lives and do not give way to fear or worry.

In the same way, husbands must always treat their wives with consideration in their life together, respecting a woman as one who, though she may be the weaker partner, is equally an heir to the life of grace. This will stop anything from coming in the way of your prayers.

Finally: you should all agree among yourselves and be sympathetic; love the brothers, have compassion and be self-effacing. Never pay back one wrong with another one; instead, pay back with a blessing. That is what you are called to do, so that you inherit a blessing yourself.

The word of the Lord.

8. A Reading from the first letter of St. John (3:18-24)

My children, our love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active; only by this can we be certain that we are children of the truth and be able to quieten our conscience in his presence, whatever accusations it may raise against us, because God is greater than our conscience and he knows everything.

My dear people, if we cannot be condemned by our own conscience, we need not be afraid in God's presence, and whatever we ask him, we shall receive, because we keep his commandments and live the kind of life that he wants. His commandments are these: that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and that we love one another as he told us to.

Whoever keeps his commandments lives in God and God lives in him. We know that he lives in us by the Spirit that he has given us.

The word of the Lord.

9. A reading from the first letter of St John (4:7-12)

My dear people, let us love one another since love comes from God and everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.

Anyone who fails to love can never have known God, because God is love. God's love for us was revealed when God sent into the world his only Son so that we could have life through him; this is the love I mean: not our love for God, but God's love for us when he sent his Son to be the sacrifice that takes our sins away.

My dear people, since God has loved us so much, we too should love one another. No one has ever seen God; but as long as we love one another God will live in us and his love will be complete in us.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL READINGS

1. A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (5:1-12)

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:

'How happy are the poor in spirit;
theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Happy the gentle:

they shall have the earth for their heritage.

Happy those who mourn:

they shall be comforted.

Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right:

they shall be satisfied.

Happy the merciful:

they shall have mercy shown them.

Happy the pure in heart:

they shall see God.

Happy the peacemakers:

they shall be called sons of God.

Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right:

theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

2. A Reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew (5:13-16)

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again?

It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men.

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hilltop cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

3. A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (7: 21. 24-29)

Jesus said to his disciples: 'It is not those who say to me, "Lord, Lord", who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven. 'Therefore, everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on rock. Rain came down, floods rose, gales blew and hurled themselves against that house, and it did not fall: it was founded on rock. But everyone who listens to these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a stupid man who built his house on sand. Rain came down, floods rose, gales blew and struck that house, and it fell; and what a fall it had!' Jesus had now finished what he wanted to say, and his teaching made a deep

impression on the people because he taught them with authority, and not like their own scribes.

The Gospel of the Lord.

4. A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (19:3-6)

Some Pharisees approached Jesus. and to test him they said. 'Is it against the Law for a man to divorce his wife on any pretext whatever?' He answered, 'Have you not read that the creator from the beginning made them male and female and that he said: This is why a man must leave father and mother, and cling to his wife, and the two become one body? They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide.'

The Gospel of the Lord

5. A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (22:35–40)

A lawyer, to disconcert Jesus, put a question, 'Master. which is the greatest commandment of the Law?' Jesus said, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second resembles it: You must love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets also.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

6. A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark (10:6-9)

Jesus said. 'From the beginning of creation God made them male and female. This is why a man must leave father and mother and the two become one body. They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united. man must not divide.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

7. A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John (2:1-11)

There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited. When they ran out of wine, since the wine provided for the wedding was all finished, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' Jesus said 'Woman why turn to me? My hour has not come yet' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' There were six stone water jars standing there, meant for the ablutions that are customary among the Jews: each could hold twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water,' and they filled them to the brim. 'Draw some out now,' he told them, 'and take it to the steward.' They did this; the steward tasted the water, and it had turned into wine. Having no idea where it came from - only the servants who had drawn the water knew - the steward called the bridegroom and said, 'People generally serve the best wine first, and keep the cheaper sort till the guests have had plenty to drink, but you have kept the best wine till now.'

This was the first of the signs given by Jesus: it was given at Cana in Galilee. He let his glory be seen, and his disciples believed in him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

8. A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John (15:9-12)

Jesus said to his disciples:

'As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete. This is my commandment: love one another, as I loved you.

The Gospel of the Lord.

9. A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John (15:12–16)

Jesus said to his disciples: 'This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you. A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you. I shall not call you servants any more, because a servant does not know his master's business; I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last; and then the Father will give you anything you ask him in my name.

The Gospel of the Lord.

10. A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John (17: 20-26)

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said:

'Holy Father, I pray not only for these, but for those also who through their words will believe in me. May they all be one. Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me. I have given them the glory you gave to me, that they may be one as we are one. With me in them and you in me, may they be so completely one that the world will realise that it was you who sent me and that I have loved them as much as you loved me. Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they may always see the glory you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Father, Righteous One, the world has not known you, but I have known you, and these have known that you have sent me. I have made your name known to them and will continue to make it known, so that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and so that I may be in them.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

CHECKLIST

BRIDEGROOM/BRIDE

PRE-MARRIAGE COURSE

Course booked

Certificate delivered to priest

CHURCH LAW REQUIREMENTS

GROOM BRIDE CATHOLIC PARTY(IES) GROOM BRIDE NON-CATHOLIC PARTY

Baptismal Certificate
Baptismal Certificate
(less than six months)

Confirmation Certificate

Statutory Declaration

of Freedom
Statutory Declaration of
Freedom

Letter of Consent if a minor

Letter of Consent if a minor

CIVIL LAW REQUIREMENTS

GROOM BRIDE

Marriage Authority certificates delivered to priest

WEDDING CEREMONY

DATE: TIME:

Nuptial Mass

Readings chosen

Readings agreed with priest

Readers invited

Two official witnesses chosen

Order of service proof sent to priest

Order of service completed

Organist booked

Music chosen

Music agreed with priest

Flowers arranged (optional)

Photographer booked (optional)

Videographer booked (optional)

CHURCH FEE

Church fee paid

WEDDING REHEARSAL

DATE:..... TIME:

Important Notes for Priests and couples preparing for marriage overseas

Marriages

France:

France: Birth certificates for all parties (up-to-date copies of birth certificates for French Nationals) and please remember that for all marriages taking place in France the French Bishops require a Letter of Intention from each party to accompany the marriage papers. The following guidance has been obtained from the French Church in London to assist couples who are marrying in France and who are required to submit with their marriage documents a letter of intention. "declaration" or "lettre d'intention"

This is an opportunity for each of you (and they must be done personally by each one of you) to give expression in your own words of the meaning you attach to the commitment you are about to make. It is important to make explicit mention of the 4 "pillars" of Christian marriage – freedom, fidelity, indissolubility, fecundity (openness to children). For the rest you may express yourselves as you so choose. It can make it easier to make this a personal statement if you compose it as letter that you address to your fiancé (e), but that is a personal choice for you. It should be written in French, if possible, as it is the French Bishops who require it as part of the official marriage dossier. You are encouraged to keep a copy of your text so that you may, in the course of the years, reread it together and refresh your sense of commitment to one another. Please give as much time as you can to this task, as you will find it

immensely beneficial in terms of making explicit the fundamental meaning of your marriage commitment.

Suggested wording

Dear...

I N N am free to marry

I see marriage as an exclusive covenant of love between husband and wife

Marriage is a lifelong commitment to my wife/husband

I will be faithful to my wife/husband for life and I am open to welcoming children into our marriage

Signed

Date

Spain:

Please remember that along with the pre-nuptial papers and supporting documentation an additional requirement of the Spanish Bishops Conference is a copy of the photo page of the passport together with a copy of the birth certificates for both parties.

Hong Kong:

Copies of birth certificates are required.

Ireland:

If you are asked to celebrate a marriage in Ireland you must be added to the Temporary Solemnisers' Register. There are forms available from some Irish dioceses, but requirements vary. It is best to seek clarification from the PP of the place of marriage. Letters of Support and Testimonials must be obtained by the Chancery Office here.

IMPORTANT: Please note that in DISPARITY OF CULT cases only, Irish dioceses now require an authenticated copy of the birth certificate of the unbaptised party. This can be authenticated by either the solicitor dealing with their Statutory Declaration or by the priest dealing with their marriage paperwork. The authentication should state: 'This is a true copy of the birth certificates of (name)' should be signed, dated and stamped with the solicitor/parish seal/stamp

Italy:

A number of Italian dioceses will no longer allow couples who are not resident in the diocese where the marriage is due to take place or who have no connection at all with the chosen place of marriage to celebrate their marriage in that place. Please ask the couple to check with the priest and the local diocese in before they finalise arrangements that the marriage will be allowed. Recently we have had papers returned to the diocese by an Italian diocese where a priest and a wedding planner had agreed to a marriage knowing that the local diocesan law would not allow the couple to celebrate their marriage in that diocese as neither of them had any association with the church in Italy. Some Italian dioceses are now passing local diocesan laws which apply to what they refer to as "Tourist Marriages" and are forbidding priests to celebrate a marriage where the couple has no connection with the church concerned and are not resident in the particular diocese. This will have implications especially when couples entrust all their plans to a wedding planner who then seeks to engage a local priest for the marriage. Please advise couples who are not Italian that they must check with the local diocese as to any restrictions concerning marriages of non-Italians in Italy.

We never send papers or entrust papers to a Wedding Planner.

A few reminders:

Papers concerning marriages that are taking place outside the diocese are sent from one diocesan curia to another. When sending paperwork to the diocese please do not include the original copies of the blue Registrar's Certificate for Marriage. These needs to be either sent directly to the place of marriage or given to the couple to take with them to the church where they are to marry (if these have not already been sent there by the Local Registrar) Please do not put them with the Pre-Nuptial papers. It is very difficult to have a new set issued should the originals be lost on-route.

Please ensure that all pre-nuptial forms are completed in full and that they are dated and signed by the couples and by the Priest/Deacon who has assisted the couple with the paperwork.

Parish Priests and Parochial Administrator are reminded of the importance of giving the permission of Canon 1115 when the marriage is taking place outside of their Parish.

If the Catholic party is domicile in your parish the Parish Priest can grant the mixed religion permission.

The mixed religion permission must be made out to the Catholic parish of the place of marriage and not the parish where the couple have been prepared

When the marriage is been celebrated by a visiting Priest or a Deacon, the Parish Priest or the Assistant Priest must grant the required Delegation of Canon 1108

Papers where there has been a previous marriage (civilly or religious) must be referred to the Southwark Metropolitan Tribunal. A marriage cannot proceed where one of the parties is still bound by a previous union. **NO DATES SHOULD BE FIXED FOR A NEW MARRIAGE UNTIL A PREVIOUS MARRIAGE HAS BEEN INVESTIGATED.**

Please take a photocopy of all paperwork you send to

the Chancery Office for your own records and in the unlikely event that the originals fail to arrive at their intended destination.