

# *Our Lady, Queen of Apostles Catholic Church*

70 Appleby Road, Stafford, 4053



*Parish Priest Fr. Denis Scanlan*

Parish Office Hours: Mon, Tues, Thurs: 9.00am-3.30pm

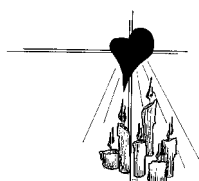
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**GUIDELINES FOR CELEBRATING YOUR  
MARRIAGE IN THE MIDST OF OUR  
PARISH COMMUNITY**



# The Vocation (Calling) of Marriage in the life of the Church:



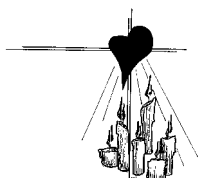
Christian Marriage is a call to witness to God's love in the love of each of the spouses for the other.

This self-giving love a couple have for one another is an experience of God who is this love and who is the source of this love.



The Church witnesses the couple entering into Covenant with each other . (A Covenant is different to a Contract as in a "civil" marriage—see below)

<b>COVENANT</b>		<b>CONTRACT</b>
<i>A Sacred Promise</i>	<i>NOT</i>	<i>A Legal Agreement</i>
<i>It's about People (Spiritual)</i>	<i>Not</i>	<i>About Things (Material)</i>
	<i>Witnessed by...</i>	
<i>The Couple and God</i>	<i>Not just</i>	<i>A Registered Celebrant and two people over 18yrs</i>
	<i>Entered into by</i>	
<i>Persons who are Mentally, Emotionally and Spiritually Mature</i>		<i>Persons (usually) over 18 years of age</i>
	<i>Other elements...</i>	
<i>Cannot be Broken</i>		<i>Can be Broken</i>
<i>No Escape Clauses (Unconditional)</i>		<i>Has Escape Clauses (Conditional)</i>



# The “Big Day”!!



Unfortunately with a multi-billion dollar Wedding Industry pushing for fancier and more expensive Weddings and Receptions, couples easily lose sight of what’s *really* needed.

We are *not* in the middle ages where your marriage is “arranged” and you still haven’t met, or where you are a princess or prince with court attendants, or the woman is the possession of her father and then is “handed over” to another man, her future husband (*where’s her mother in all this — and his parents?*). Why is it that the “Wedding Industry” still promotes this? Money, of course!

What you do **not need**: -- Limos, a big white dress, bridesmaids, groomsmen, page boys, flower girls, an expensive sit-down reception, “Wedding Planners” (definitely!!), in fact anything that costs lots of money and causes much stress!!



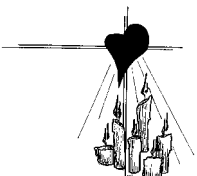
What celebrating a Catholic Marriage **needs**: -- Freedom, Commitment, Self-giving Love, Faith, Prayer, Self-knowledge, a relationship grounded on mutual knowledge, trust, respect, and growth, forgiveness, a partnership between the couple and God who is the source of their love, a joining of equals keeping their uniqueness and, at the same time, becoming one.

In **practical** terms (for the big day): -- Your good clothes, your friends and family including your faith community, two people over 18yrs as witnesses with the Priest/Deacon, a celebration afterwards reflecting who you are (even a BYO everything shared meal!). It’s a day to enjoy with a firm eye set on the *next 50 or so years*, and not one to go into debt or be stressed out!

## Did you know???

As a couple, you are the “presiders” of this ceremony and therefore should enter the church together. People preceding you in the procession could include both your families. The idea of a Bride being escorted by her father comes from an age where she was virtually the property of her father and was to be “handed over” to another man. (Some places still ask “Who gives this woman away?”)

Check out some different ways in which the ceremony can be celebrated e.g. why don’t the two of you arrive before everyone else and welcome your guests? Why spend lots of money on a “Bridal Dress” and “Tuxes” when there are many other beautiful (and more appropriate) things you could wear? How can you involve your parents in a more significant way? Etc.



# How do we arrange to Celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage in Our Lady, Queen of Apostles Parish, Stafford?



It would be really helpful to yourselves if —

- **BEFORE** you announce your engagement or publicise your intention to marry and
- **BEFORE** you make any arrangements e.g. reception places, cars etc
- **AND** at **least** 9 months before any thought-of-date, *you CONTACT the Parish Office to begin preparation.*

Preparation includes:

Undertaking one of the various Pre-Marriage Relationship Evaluation Programs available which are to help you identify strengths and areas needing more work in your relationship. (After doing this, then could be a good time to make the news public)

This is followed by looking at the various options in the Catholic Marriage Ceremony (see page 7 for some examples).

**Please turn over the page for more details....**



## Other information:

1. You will need to make an appointment with our Parish Priest at least **twelve months before** the wedding date.

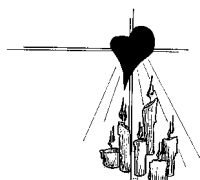
2. You are **required** to complete a Pre-Marriage Relationship Course. We **recommend** one of the following courses:

- a. **Centacare** – Foccus – three one-hour sessions by appointment. ----- Phone (07) 3252 4371
- b. **Life and Human Relations** – Foccus – three one-hour sessions offered weekdays, evenings or Saturday mornings. -- Phone (07) 3369 2124
- c. **Engaged Encounter** – contact Phil and Clare Anderson on 3264 8704.

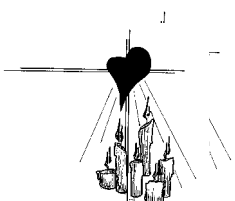
3. Our **booking fee** is \$500 and \$250 for those who have been contributing through our Parish's planned giving programme. The booking remains temporary until this fee is paid.

4. You are welcome to invite your **own priest** to celebrate your marriage. Usually, all paperwork (except Registers) will be his responsibility.

5. During your first **interview** with the priest, you will be asked if you are free to marry, about your understanding of the commitment you are making and your ability to live it out. This is a good opportunity for you to ask questions. At this meeting, you will complete the necessary paperwork. You will also be made aware of some of the **many options** in the Catholic Marriage Ceremony.



6. It is *important* that you bring with you –
  - a. a copy of your *Birth Certificate* or a *Passport* (if you have one).
  - b. a copy of your *Baptismal Certificate* (for the Catholic – a recent copy, not more than six months old). This is obtained by telephoning, emailing or writing to the place of Baptism (and, for “snail mail”, enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope).
7. Although *Orders of Service* are often the cause of stress and extra expense and are not necessary. Please ensure that the priest has the opportunity to proof read your booklet before printing.
8. *Floral arrangements* – Each couple is responsible for obtaining and arranging their own flowers.
9. Each couple will arrange their own *organist/musicians* and will be responsible for paying their fee directly to them. That organist/musician must comply with ALL copyright law requirements. Our Parish Office is happy to provide names and contacts upon request. (Please note the following)
10. *Policy on music* – Because marriage is a sacred, spiritual event in a couple’s life, it is important that the music be appropriate for the occasion, especially during the Church ceremony. It is important that you discuss your choice of music with the officiating priest. A Sound System is available for CD’s if required.
11. A Church *Rehearsal*, if needed, is to be arranged with your Celebrant.
12. We request that your guests *please refrain from* throwing confetti, rice or flower petals in the Church surrounds.
13. It is important for the Ceremony to **begin on time**. Other ceremonies could follow yours and will also need to start on time. It can happen that a ceremony is shortened / postponed if it is going to interfere with the preparations for the following ceremony.



# Some Texts from the Catholic Marriage Rite:



## **Prayers are Prayed:**

Father, you have made the bond of marriage a holy

mystery, a symbol of Christ's love for his Church.

Hear our prayers for N. and N.

With faith in you and in each other they pledge their love today.

May their lives always bear witness to the reality of that love.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

**R. Amen.**

## **Readings from the Bible are proclaimed: (for example...)**

Dear friends,

Let us love one another, because love comes from God.

If we love one another,

God lives in union with us,

and His love is made perfect in us.

(1 John 4/7,12)

## **Questions are asked:**

N. and N. have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage?

Will you love and honour each other as husband and wife for the rest of your lives?

Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?

## **Lives are given:**

I, N., take you, N., to be my wife/husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honour you all the days of my life.

**Celebrant** (*on behalf of the Church Community*):

You have declared your consent before the Church. May the Lord in his goodness strengthen your consent and fill you both with his blessings. What God has joined, no one can divide. **R. Amen**

## **Rings are Blessed:**

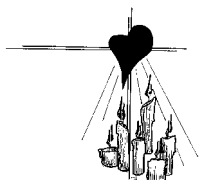
May the Lord bless + these rings which you give to each other as the sign of your love and fidelity.

## **More Prayers are Prayed:**

That their married love may reflect God's saving love for the human family, let us pray to the Lord.

That, through loving one another in Christ, they may come to love Christ in their neighbour, let us pray to the Lord.

## **The Couple is Blessed.**



# *A Prayer for Engaged Couples*



We praise you, Lord,  
for your gentle plan draws together  
your children, N. and N.,  
in love for one another.  
Strengthen their hearts,  
so that they will keep  
faith with each other,  
please you in all things,  
and so come to the  
happiness of celebrating  
the sacrament of their marriage.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

# *A Prayer for Married Couples*



Lord God and Creator,  
we bless and praise your name.

In the beginning you made man and woman,  
so that they might enter a communion of life and love.

You likewise blessed the union of N. with N.,  
so that they might reflect the union of Christ with his Church:

look with kindness on them today.

Amid the joys and struggles of their life  
you have preserved the union between them;

renew their marriage covenant,

increase your love in them,

and strengthen their bond of peace,

so that surrounded by their children

they may always rejoice

in the gift of your blessing.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

