

A Guide to Getting Married at St Mary's, East Hendred



ST MARY'S welcomes parishioners and baptised Catholics with a connection to the parish to celebrate their marriage. Your first point of contact should be the Parish Priest, Mgr Andrew Burnham, St Mary's Catholic Church, St Mary's Road, East Hendred, Wantage, OX12 8LF. 01235 835038.

aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

You should discuss your plans with Fr Andrew and obtain permission, if you would like another priest to assist at or conduct the service. Throughout this Guide, reference is made to Fr Andrew. If there is any difficulty contacting him, then e-mail the Parish Office on hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Eligibility

In order to marry in the Catholic Church, both partners should be baptised (i.e. 'Christened') Christians and one a confirmed Catholic. If you do not fulfil these criteria but would still like to marry in St Mary's, Fr Andrew will be able to advise you whether this is possible. Both parties must also be free to marry according to the rules of the Catholic Church. If you are concerned that you may not be eligible, seek the advice of Fr Andrew. You will be asked for copies of your baptismal and confirmation certificates. If you do not have these certificates Fr Andrew can obtain them. However, you will need to know where and when you were baptised. -

Legal Registration

As well as making arrangements with Fr Andrew you will also need to register your intention at your local Registry Office who will advise on all necessary steps.

Preparation

The Oxford Marriage Preparation team runs a course to help you prepare for marriage. In this diocese the Bishop requires all couples planning to marry to participate in such a course. Further information about the Oxford one is available from Fr Andrew.

In addition, there are a number of websites you can investigate as you plan for Marriage. For example, you could Google

[marriage in catholic church basic guide \(marriage care\).pdf](#)

Also recommended is 'Engaged Encounter' www.engagedencounter.org/

Fr Andrew will also meet with you on a number of occasions prior to your wedding, perhaps with other couples, to help you prepare spiritually as well as to organise the practical details.

The Marriage Service

This is the central part of the whole day. You will be coming to the church to pray for Almighty God's blessing and support on your life together. Popular songs and readings with no reference to the spiritual nature of marriage are not appropriate for the church ceremony. You should also give thought as to who will do the readings and bidding prayers.

Music

Fr Andrew will advise on suitable hymns and music. St Mary's may be able to arrange for a small choir to be present during the service to lead the singing and we can fix an organist for you. If you wish to make your own arrangements for music you are most welcome to do so. Fr Andrew will be able to advise on when the church is free for your own organist/soloist to practise.

Flowers

For Sunday services St Mary's is usually decorated by parishioners, sometimes with flowers from their own gardens. If you would like something more formal there are a number of options. Most couples arrange for their florist to provide arrangements or the church. Some decorate the church themselves.

On occasion members of the parish are available to help arrange flowers that you provide for the altar. However, this cannot be guaranteed and you will need

to make alternative arrangements if you require any additional flowers or if you wish to use the flowers for the reception. Contact details for local flower arranging are available from Fr Andrew,

If you are organising your own flowers please arrange a suitable time for your florist to have access to the church. Most couples leave the flowers in the church, though some do use them again for the reception. However, we would ask that you leave at least one arrangement in the sanctuary so that the church is decorated for Sunday Mass.

Order of Service

This should be arranged as soon as details of readings, prayers and music are agreed. If you are planning to have this professionally printed it is important you leave sufficient time. Please see advice on the format from Fr Andrew who will be able to provide a draft.

Rehearsal

Most couples hold a rehearsal on the evening before their wedding and invite any family and special guests, readers, musicians &c. to come along too. One reason for the rehearsal is so that the wedding itself can be a relaxed, happy occasion and a time of prayer for you both. Please arrange a suitable time and date with Fr Andrew. The usual time is 6pm on the evening before.

Confetti

Please ensure that any confetti is biodegradable.

Cameras and Videos

Official photographers work as directed by the priest. The use of cameras otherwise is gently discouraged during the Wedding Service. If you particularly want to video the service please ensure that the camera is placed discreetly and that you have the permission of any musicians to record them.

Parking

St Mary's Road can easily be blocked by parked cars. We suggest that one of your Ushers supervises the parking. If there will be a lot of cars you should ask St Amand's school for permission to use their car park and/or the school field. 01235 833342. Other local arrangements may also be possible: ask Fr Andrew.

Lavatories

There is a lavatory available at the South East of the Church. This is approached from the outside by way of the Churchyard path along the perimeter wall.

Ushers

You will need to appoint ushers to assist at the ceremony. Though being an usher is an honour, it is also a responsibility. Ushers hand out service sheets, help guests with issues such as finding their seats, location of the lavatory, and wheelchair access. They also respond to any emergency arising during the ceremony, and ensure that, after the service, the Church is left as it should be, with service sheets and litter collected up.

Authorised Person

There is a statutory fee for the attendance of the authorised person (who acts as registrar). The fee of £50 includes expenses and the cost of a copy of the Marriage Certificate. Since the name of the payee is variable, this is most conveniently paid in cash through the parish priest.

Music

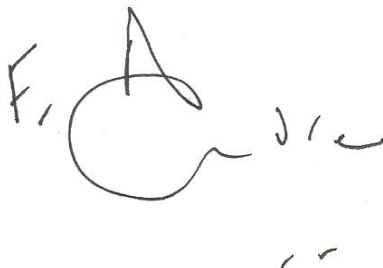
These fees are negotiated with and paid directly to the musicians. Typically the Organist will expect £100 and the Choir usually receives a donation of £50.

Other Fees

St Mary's does not want to deter people from marrying in church for reasons of cost and there is no collection taken. The total cost of the church wedding should usually be about 5% of your wedding budget. Thus, for a wedding which costs £1,000 or less, a contribution of £50 for all that we offer would be entirely appropriate, but a wedding budget of £20,000 or more would suggest a much larger donation. The priest relies on donations for living costs and we therefore suggest that a donation to the priest would be 5% of the budget, minus the other fees paid out. Cheques should be payable to:

Rev Andrew Burnham

We hope you enjoy your day and wish you a long and happy marriage.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. A. Burnham'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'A'.

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