

# **St Nicholas Parish Tamworth**

*A Christian Community in the Catholic Tradition*

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Some information for those preparing for marriage



## **CONGRATULATIONS!**

St Nicholas Church Community wishes to help you prepare for your wedding so that your marriage will be all that you hope it will be, and more.

Marriage is a most holy Sacrament,  
a Covenant made in the presence of God,  
by which you pledge each other love and fidelity  
for the rest of your lives.

We hope our preparation programme will assist you  
as you enter this Sacred Mystery.

# OUR PROGRAMME

## Step 1. Booking the Church

Your first call to see the priest should be several months before the proposed wedding date. This is the time to book the church and begin the preparation programme. The initial forms will be filled out and you will be able to discuss your particular requirements with the priest. You will need your Birth Certificates and Baptismal Certificates (if available).

**Note :** *Weddings are not permitted on Holy Thursday, Good Friday or Holy Saturday*

## Step 2. "Prepare"

Because of the seriousness of this step, and because the chances of marriage break-down are so high, no one is permitted to celebrate their wedding in the Catholic Church without some kind of preparation. In the larger cities, various preparation programmes are available. In St Nicholas Parish, the course called "**Prepare**" is offered, and is conducted by Gunnedah Parish or privately organised at St Nicholas Parish if outside the Gunnedah schedule of February and September. Couples fill out a questionnaire which covers aspects of their relationship such as being realistic about marriage, making decisions and sharing work, communicating and handling conflict, personality issues, sex and communication, religious attitudes, finances, children, etc. The "prepare" programme is compulsory.

## Step 3.

Between the Preparation time and the day for the Wedding all relevant documents necessary for the Paperwork should be provided. It is important that the couple keeps in contact with the Parish and that the Priest receives the Liturgy for the Wedding a few weeks before the Wedding practice.

## Step 4.

A wedding practice will usually take place on the evening before the marriage, the time to be arranged with the priest.

## What about costs

1. **A fee of \$500** is normally charged for Weddings to be paid before the day of the Wedding.
2. **'Prepare'** programme: \$90 (Gunnedah Parish) – if the couple choose to do this.
3. **Church decoration and flowers** – are the responsibility of the couple. You may wish to have a relative, friend or florist to arrange flowers. There are artificial flowers available in the church. Any decorations or flowers used during the wedding **MUST** be taken away after the wedding since Mass will normally be celebrated soon after.
4. **Music & Singing**- Couples make their own arrangements about music and singing. There is an excellent sound system in the church should you choose to use CDs. Please speak with the priest beforehand about the suitability of songs to be used in the Church.
5. **Wedding Booklets** – are the responsibility of the couple. The priest will help with advice about the Order of Service, Readings, Hymns etc. It is important to show the draft booklet to the priest before making final copies. You might find it convenient to email a copy to the priest: [stnicholasparish@armidale.catholic.org.au](mailto:stnicholasparish@armidale.catholic.org.au).

## **CERTIFICATES YOU WILL NEED**

- 1. Birth Certificate** – the registration number on the Certificate must be recorded on the Notice of Intended Marriage. [Passports are not accepted]
- 2. Baptism Certificate** – this can be obtained by contacting the church where you were baptised. If you have a copy already it should be updated 6 months before the Wedding. You should ask that your date of Confirmation and First Holy Communion be included as well. If you are not a Catholic, and cannot obtain your Baptism certificate, or if you were never baptised, it is important that you discuss this with the priest.

A divorced person cannot normally be married again in the Catholic Church unless the previous valid marriage has been annulled. Please speak with the priest if you need to know more about this.

## **IN GOOD FAITH**

Understandably, it is easy to get lost in the happy details of planning for your wedding. But the wedding is a day...your marriage is a lifetime. Therefore, if you think about it, the most serious part of your life-long commitment is the spiritual dimension. It is God who has brought you together, and it is before God that you will pledge love and fidelity for life.

It is important now that you:

- Talk about your feelings with regard to God, faith, prayer, etc.
- Talk about what part religion will play in your life together
- Work out your mutual understanding about the baptism of your children

## **THE RELIGION OF YOUR CHILDREN**

A child is a wonderful gift from God, and a great responsibility. If you are blessed with children, you will naturally do all in your power to care for their physical life, you are also responsible for their spiritual life. You will be the first and best teachers of your children, and their attitude to God will largely be determined by your own attitudes. Being married in the Church means that you take your relationship with God seriously, and if you are a Catholic, you are asked to make a promise to do all in your power to have your children baptised and brought up as Catholics. Experience shows how important it is to come to a mutually acceptable agreement about these matters before you get married.

## **SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR YOUR MARRIAGE...**

It is important that you and your partner pray together in so far as your faith allows. If you have not been going to church, it is an ideal time to make a fresh start. Catholics are strongly encouraged to prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage by making a good confession in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Talk this over with each other and the priest.

## **THE WEDDING CEREMONY**

The priest will help plan your wedding ceremony, and advise you about readings, prayers, etc. With desktop publishing, many couples produce their own souvenir booklet. It is not necessary to print the whole ceremony. It is probably a good idea to include the names of the wedding party etc, the words of hymns and the readings from Sacred Scripture. You should discuss with the priest whether you wish to have your Marriage during a Nuptial Mass. This is a relatively rare celebration today, and is most beautiful and appropriate way for a faith-filled couple to begin their married life. However, it is not advisable unless there is strong faith-commitment and practice by both parties.



