

# Getting Married in a Catholic Church Abroad?



Information for Couples.



**Archdiocese of Liverpool**

## Set a Date

- ◆ Many couples choose to get married abroad every year and it is perfectly possible to get married in a Catholic church, but both the civil and ecclesiastical procedures are a little more complicated as a result. So please allow at least 6 months to complete the formalities.
- ◆ First of all you will need to establish that the church is willing to host your wedding ceremony and to book the date. You may do this yourselves or you may choose to obtain the services of a wedding planner in the locality of the church. Please obtain the postal address of the church in which you intend to marry.
- ◆ You will also need to establish what is required for marriage, according to the civil law of the country in which you intend to marry, and to ensure that you can meet these requirements.
- ◆ Once you have booked a date for your wedding, you will need to contact your local parish priest here in the UK to inform him of your intention to get married abroad, so that he can compile the necessary documentation required by Church law.
- ◆ At least one of you must be Catholic.

## Documentation

- ◆ You will need to complete a prenuptial enquiry form in your local parish and to provide certain other documents.
- ◆ If you are Catholic you will need to provide a copy of your baptismal certificate dated no more than 6 months prior to the wedding.
- ◆ If you were baptised in another Christian tradition, you will also need to provide a copy of your baptismal certificate, but this does not need to be recently dated.
- ◆ Catholics may additionally be asked to obtain letters from parishes where they have lived since the age of 16 attesting to their freedom to marry.

# Freedom to Marry

- ◆ If you belong to another religious denomination, or have no particular religious adherence, you will need to have statements signed by two people who have known you for a long time, such as your parents, who can testify to your freedom to marry.
- ◆ If your wedding involves a Catholic and someone who is not Catholic, then the Catholic will need permission or a dispensation to marry. This is normally granted readily if there is no problem about the Catholic upbringing of any children the couple may have.
- ◆ Couples are normally required to complete a marriage preparation course, either in their local parish or given by organisations such as Marriage Care.
- ◆ Please check with your parish priest what course is available in your area.

## Curia

- ◆ Once the documentation is complete, the marriage papers will be sent by your parish priest to the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Liverpool to check that everything is in order and to issue any permission or dispensation that may be necessary. He in turn will forward the documents to the curia of the diocese where your wedding is to take place. If the receiving diocese finds everything in order, the documents will then be sent to the church where the wedding is to take place.

# Nuptial Blessing

Holy Father, maker of the whole world,  
who created man and woman in your own image  
and willed that their union be crowned with your blessing,  
we humbly beseech you for these your servants,  
who are joined today in the Sacrament of Matrimony.

May your abundant blessing, Lord,  
come down upon this bride, N.,  
and upon N., her companion for life,  
and may the power of your Holy Spirit  
set their hearts aflame from on high,  
so that, living out together the gift of Matrimony,  
they may (adorn their family with children  
and) enrich the Church.

In happiness may they praise you, O Lord,  
in sorrow may they seek you out;  
may they have the joy of your presence  
to assist them in their toil,  
and know that you are near  
to comfort them in their need;  
let them pray to you in the holy assembly  
and bear witness to you in the world,  
and after a happy old age,  
together with the circle of friends that surrounds them,  
may they come to the Kingdom of Heaven.  
Through Christ our Lord.

