

Information for Couples planning to marry at St Peter's Church, Stonyhurst

The following notes are intended to help you plan your wedding here at St Peter's Stonyhurst. Please note that you do not have a firm booking unless you have asked your local Parish Priest to complete the Wedding Enquiry Form and it has been acknowledged by the Parish Priest here at St Peter's.

Mass or Wedding Service?

The first decision to be made is whether you would like to celebrate your marriage within a Nuptial Mass or within a wedding ceremony. Where both parties are Catholics and the majority of your guests will be Catholic it is lovely to have a full Catholic Mass with communion. However, where one party is not Catholic a wedding service is more appropriate. A full Mass typically takes an hour and a quarter, whereas a service will be about 45 mins. Please discuss this with the Priest who will be conducting the wedding.

Who will celebrate the Wedding?

You are free to invite any Priest or Deacon in good standing with the Catholic Church to conduct the Ceremony. In fact, if you have a family friend who is a Catholic Priest, or you know your own Parish Priest well, you may invite them to preside. It is wonderful when the Celebrant can add a personal touch. Please contact the Priest at Stonyhurst, without delay, if this is your preference.

Do I need to print an Order of Service?

Most couples like to create their own Order of Service, perhaps to give your guests as a souvenir. It is not a necessity as you may use the hymn books provided in the Church. Your Authorised Person will be able to help you with this.

Choosing the readings for the Ceremony

You are welcome to choose the readings that will be used in your Ceremony and to choose who will read them. The Priest celebrating the wedding will be able to help you with this. There is normally a reading from the Old Testament followed by a psalm or a suitable hymn. This is followed by a New Testament reading, such as a section from St Paul's epistles, followed by an Alleluia verse. The Priest will always read the Gospel, but you may select which one.

Bidding Prayers

You are encouraged to construct your own bidding prayers (or intercessions) and choose who will read these. The Celebrant will be able to give you guidance here. As well as praying for your happiness as a couple you can also pray for those who have helped you reach this day and those who would have liked to attend but could not be present for whatever reason.

Music **THE PLAYING OF PRE-RECORDED MUSIC IS NOT PERMITTED AT STONYHURST**

A wedding is a joyful celebration and music is important on this day.

You are welcome to invite any musicians to play or sing at your wedding, including a choir. Whilst you are free to choose your own music, please bear in mind the suitability of the piece for the church. Hymns need to be well known so that your guests can join in. Where couples come from different religious backgrounds the music can reflect this.

If you require an Organist the following have lots of experience playing here;

Mr Greg Mann (Director of music at SMH) 07545087968

Mr Andrew Henderson (Director of music at Stonyhurst) 01254 827086

Mr Stewart Whillis (Organist at St John the Divine, Hurst Green) 01772423035

Your chosen organist may also advise you about what music is appropriate for a Church setting.

Please negotiate the fee for this service directly with the organist you choose.

Can I write my own vows?

This is **NOT** possible in the Catholic rite of marriage. There are, however, different wording options available. Please speak to the Celebrant of the wedding and he will help you choose which options might suit you best.

Authorised Person

You will be assigned an Authorised Person (AP) to oversee the legal aspects of your marriage once the Priest at St Peter's has received your fully completed wedding Enquiry Form and your wedding date has been confirmed. There are currently 3 AP's at St Peter's all of whom work within the regulations of the General Register Office for marriages in England. There is a fee to authorise your marriage which is currently £150 (2024) payable in cash at the rehearsal.

Flowers and decorating the Church

St Peter's is very beautiful and does not need much decoration. However, if you wish you are welcome to add a display of flowers and/or decorate the pew ends as you like. All decorations should be removed after the Ceremony and arrangements should be made with your chosen florist to do this.

Use of confetti

The use of confetti or rose petals is **NOT** permitted within the church or within the grounds of Stonyhurst. You should save this for your reception venue.

Disabled access

If one of your guests is in a wheelchair there is a way of accessing the church that avoids steps. Please ask the Priest or the Authorised Person to make sure that this access is open

The photographer

You will want to record your special day with photographs but there are some limits that the photographer needs to observe. St Peter's is in the grounds of Stonyhurst College and, if your wedding is during term time when pupils of the College are present, it is necessary to observe some restrictions, e.g. pupils may not be photographed/videoed, and access to certain areas of the grounds is not permitted. **THE USE OF DRONES IS NOT ALLOWED.** Please ask your photographer to have a word with the Celebrant before the Ceremony.

The videographer

A video of the wedding is permitted, especially if some family members live too far away to attend on the wedding day. Again, certain restrictions apply so make sure that they know to speak to the Celebrant beforehand.

Is a reception at Stonyhurst possible?

Former pupils of the College may be able to book areas of the College as a venue for their reception. Please contact a member of the 'Stonyhurst Experience' team on 01254 827270

Booking a rehearsal

It is usual for a rehearsal to be held a day or two before your wedding.

All those involved in the Ceremony, e.g. the wedding party, the witnesses and the readers, should attend.

Please contact your Celebrant and your AP to make arrangements for this.

Further help:

Redemptorist Publications have a useful booklet called 'Your Wedding'

<https://www.rpbooks.co.uk/your-wedding-redesigned-edition>