



PLANNING A WEDDING AT
ST PANCRAS
CATHOLIC CHURCH,
IPSWICH



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WELCOME

First, Fr Joseph would like to congratulate you on your engagement and your forthcoming wedding, and promises to keep you in his prayers during this time of preparation.

You will have many things to think about and to arrange in the coming weeks and months. The following notes are designed to help you plan the wedding ceremony at St Pancras and provide guidance for producing an Order of Service. *(These notes do not address the Marriage Preparation programme. For this, please contact Fr Joseph separately.)*

NUPTIAL MASS OR WEDDING SERVICE?

A Catholic marriage ceremony is, first and foremost, an act of worship of Almighty God during which the couple make public vows of fidelity to each other until death, to the exclusion of other relationships, in a bond of love, blessed by God, that is open to the possibility of bringing new life into the world.

A Nuptial Mass is usually reserved for couples where both bride and groom are Catholic. A Nuptial Mass is similar to an ordinary Sunday Mass, with readings and hymns, and music, but with the vows being taken after the homily, and a Nuptial Blessing immediately after the 'Our Father.' (At Mass, only Catholics in good standing with the Church, and who are in a state of grace, that is, having been to Confession recently, may receive Holy Communion.) A Nuptial Mass will last approximately an hour to an hour and a quarter, plus the time it takes to sign the register.

Although a Nuptial Mass is always encouraged where both bride and groom are Catholic, some couples choose a Wedding Service instead if most of their guests are unfamiliar with Catholic ceremonies, for example if the couple are Catholic but their families are not.

If one of you is not baptised, a Nuptial Mass will not be possible, and you will have a Wedding Service instead. A Wedding Service

includes prayers, readings, hymns and music, and a homily, immediately after which the couple make their vows. There is no Holy Communion at a Wedding Service. A Wedding Service will last approximately 45 minutes plus the time it takes to sign the register.

DAY OF THE WEEK & TIME

A wedding ceremony can take place at St Pancras at almost any time, Monday to Saturday, so long as it does not clash with other services in the church. (Please note that in the UK weddings must take place during daylight hours.) The most popular day for weddings is Saturday, although Fridays are becoming more popular. Weddings can usually take place at St Pancras:

- on Saturdays between the hours of 12 noon and 4pm,
- and on Fridays from 12 noon onwards.

READINGS

All readings for the Mass should be taken from the scriptures using the Lectionary from which Mass readings are drawn. The priest will help you to choose them if you wish.

Usually there is a *First Reading* from the Old Testament, followed by a *Responsorial Psalm* (which may be replaced by a psalm-based hymn). If there is a *Second Reading* (which is optional) it should be from the New Testament.

Then follows a *Gospel Acclamation*, or ‘Alleluia!’ verse, which, in turn, is followed by the *Gospel Reading* itself. Again, the priest will help you to choose one if you wish.

A selection of possible readings may be found in the attachment, ‘Readings for Weddings.’ These readings are especially appropriate, but you are not limited to readings from this selection.

Poems and other readings may be read at the reception afterwards.

MUSIC

All music should be sacred in nature, and all hymns must be chosen from our parish hymn book, the *Celebration Hymnal for Everyone*, published by McCrimmon, 1994. Only organ music is permitted, or unaccompanied singing. Recorded music is not permitted. St Pancras Church can arrange for an organist for an additional fee. Family members or friends of the couple may sing as cantors or form a choir for the Mass.

There may be music, or hymns may be sung, at one or more of the following points during:

A Nuptial Mass

- as the guests gather
- as the bride walks down the aisle at the beginning
- a hymn may be sung once the bride has arrived at the altar
- in place of the Responsorial Psalm (so long as the hymn is psalm-based)
- at the Offertory whilst the Bread and Wine are being prepared
- during or immediately after Holy Communion
- as the register is being signed after Mass
- as the couple process down the aisle at the end.

A Wedding Service

- as the guests gather
- as the bride walks down the aisle at the beginning
- a hymn may be sung once the bride has arrived at the altar
- in place of the Responsorial Psalm (so long as the hymn is psalm-based)
- as the register is being signed after the ceremony
- as the couple process down the aisle at the end.

FLOWERS

You are welcome to arrange to have flowers in the church for your wedding, for example two pedestals on the sanctuary and/or pew ends, but please speak to the priest first. We ask that pedestal arrangements be left in the church for the weekend services after the wedding. Arrangements should be made by the couple to remove pew ends at the end of the wedding ceremony. The cost of flower arrangements is not included in the church fee.

FEEES

St Pancras has a flat fee of £250 for wedding ceremonies, both for Nuptial Masses and Wedding Services. This fee does not include the cost of music, flowers, or the parish registrar. (Where at least one of the parties – bride or groom – lives in the parish or is a regular worshipper at St Pancras, and where there is financial hardship, it may be possible to waive part or all of the fee. Please speak to Fr Joseph.)

FURTHER QUESTIONS

Please do not hesitate to contact Fr Joseph using the e-mail address on the front of this leaflet if you have any further questions.

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