



The Weddings Policy of the Parish of Lisdoonvarna and Kilshanny

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Dear friends,

Sincere congratulations to you both on your love for each other and for deciding to explore the possibility of entering into the lifelong sacrament of Christian marriage.

Please read first *The Letter of Welcome and Introduction to The Weddings Policy of the Parish of Lisdoonvarna and Kilshanny*. These few pages of notes are offered then as a help to those who want to proceed further in making a formal request to have their wedding in one of the four churches of this parish; Lisdoonvarna, Kilshanny, Doolin or Toovahera.

Request to Book a Wedding in the Parish of Lisdoonvarna and Kilshanny

It is best to begin this process at least one year before the proposed date of marriage.

If she is not a resident parishioner of this parish the bride must ask her parish priest in the place where she is resident to complete, sign and seal the *Letter of Recommendation of the Parish Priest of the Bride*. This is to be returned along with the *Request to Book a Wedding in the Parish of Lisdoonvarna and Kilshanny*.

If he is not a resident parishioner of this parish the groom must ask his parish priest in the place where she is resident to complete, sign and seal the *Letter of Recommendation of the Parish Priest of the Groom*. This is to be returned along with the *Request to Book a Wedding in the Parish of Lisdoonvarna and Kilshanny*.

If the couple are bringing their own priest friend or family member to serve as their Celebrant/Solemniser they must ask him to complete, sign and seal *The Delegation Request*. This is to be returned along with the *Request to Book a Wedding in the Parish of Lisdoonvarna and Kilshanny*.

After assembling these documents the couple must then complete the form *Request to Book a Wedding in the Parish of Lisdoonvarna and Kilshanny*. All documents, and the donation to the parish, are then to be sent to The Parish Priest, The Rectory, Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare.

If the request is granted a confirmation will be sent by mail or by email. If the request cannot be granted your documents and donation will be returned to you. Please understand that not all requests can be granted for the practical and pastoral reasons outlined in *The*

Letter of Welcome and Introduction to The Weddings Policy of the Parish of Lisdoonvarna and Kilshanny.

If your Wedding Booking is accepted the following information will be helpful.

Notifying the Civil Registrar of Marriages

The couple must give at least three months notice of their wedding to the civil registrar of marriages. This must be done by making an appointment to visit the civil registrar in person.

In Galway, the Registrar of Marriages is at 25 Newcastle Road, Galway, 091 – 523122.

In Ennistymon, the Registrar of Marriages is at The Health Centre, Ennistymon, Co. Clare, 065 – 7071143.

In Ennis, the Registrar of Marriages is at The Sandfield Centre, Ennis, Co. Clare, 065 – 06868050.

Further contact details of other Registrars of Marriage throughout the country and related information can be found at www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/1/bdm/marriagesinireland

The couple will be required to bring the following documentation to the registrar's office:

- photo identity (preferably a passport or driving license).
- names and dates of birth of witnesses.
- name of the Church where they wish to be married.
- date and time of marriage.
- name of the deacon, priest or bishop who will officiate at the marriage; this presumes that the celebrant is a registered solemniser and that he has agreed to officiate at the marriage. Couples *must* check this with the registrar.
- if either party has been previously married, they must provide the civil registrar with an original divorce decree, or a death certificate if widowed.

When all the civil requirements have been completed satisfactorily the couple will receive, from the registrar, a *Marriage Registration Form* (MRF). Without this form the couple cannot get married nor may the solemniser proceed with the marriage ceremony.

The solemniser and the parish priest of the place of marriage will receive a notification from the civil registrar's office concerning the marriage due to take place.

The couple must present the MRF to the solemniser before the wedding so that he can check that the details are correct before the marriage takes place. This should be done as early as possible.

If changes are necessary – for instance, changing the name of the solemniser – the couple should be advised to contact the civil registrar to arrange for the re-issue of the MRF at the earliest possible stage before the ceremony.

It is *essential* that the couple return the MRF to the Registrar as soon as possible after the wedding and no later than one month after the wedding. This is a serious obligation on the couple themselves.

Further information on civil registration, the Verbal Declaration of No Civil Impediment and the List of Solemnisers can be found in this document *Getting Married in Church – New Requirements for Civil Registration* by The Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference available here www.catholicbishops.ie/2007/10/03/getting-married-in-church/

Booking a Catholic Pre-Marriage Course recognised by the Bishop of our Diocese

The sooner this course is booked the more choice you will have in finding one that suits your schedule. The course must be one that is recognised by the Catholic Church and that includes significant content on the Catholic theology and spirituality of marriage. Courses run by commercial agencies are not accepted in this diocese. It is important to check this out fully before paying for and undertaking a course that may end up not be recognised. This diocese recognises and accepts courses offered by the following Church organisations:

- Nazareth Family Institute, Dublin www.nazarethfamilyinstitute.net 01-2896647
- Accord www.accord.ie Galway 091 – 562331, Ennis 065 - 6824297
- Esker Redemptorists, Athenry, Co. Galway www.redemptoristsesker.ie 091 – 844549

Couples from outside this diocese should show that their pre-marriage course is accepted by their own diocese.

Meeting your local priest to complete The Pre-Nuptial Enquiry Form

This meeting should take place about six months before the date of the wedding. It is the responsibility of the Parish Priests in the parishes where the bride and groom are currently residing to meet with them to ensure that they are properly spiritually and pastorally prepared and that they are free to get married. Central to this is the completion of *The Pre-Nuptial Enquiry Form*. This form is completed by way of interview and is under a religious oath. Each party testifies before God to their local priest that they are not bound by existing marriage or religious vows, and that they fully understand and accept the implications of entering into a lifelong Catholic sacramental marriage. They promise to practice their Catholic faith regularly, and to do all that they can to have their children baptised and brought up as Catholics.

The bride and groom should bring to this meeting the following documents:

- a *Baptism Certificate* (not issued more than six months before the date of the wedding).
- a *Confirmation Certificate*.
- a *Letter of Freedom* from the Parish Priest of every parish they have lived in for longer than six months at a time since the age of 16 – or alternatively a *Sworn Affidavit* from a solicitor or commissioner for oaths that they have never attempted religious or civil marriage ever in any jurisdiction.
- a copy of the *Pre-Marriage Course Certificate*.
- if widowed, a copy of their previous spouse's *Death Certificate*.
- *Church Annulment Documents* relating to any previous union.
- In cases where one party is not a Roman Catholic a *Dispensation* from the bishop may be required.

The Parish Priests of the bride's parish and the groom's parish will then forward by mail the completed documents and enclosures to be reviewed and archived by the Parish Priest of

the Parish of Lisdoonvarna and Kilshanny. These documents should arrive no later than three months before the date of the wedding.

Planning the Wedding Liturgy

The primary purpose of the wedding liturgy is to give worship and praise to God. This should be borne in mind throughout the planning of your special day.

Couples should decide if they wish to have their wedding within a celebration of Holy Mass, or if they wish to have a wedding service without Mass. A wedding service without Mass is often more appropriate if one party and their guests are not Roman Catholics, or for other sincere spiritual reasons. Please discuss this further with a priest if you would like more guidance in making the right choice.

The Parish Priests of the bride's parish and the groom's parish may offer to help the couple to choose scripture readings and good sacred liturgical music for their wedding ceremony.

The following elements of *The Weddings Policy of the Parish of Lisdoonvarna and Kilshanny* are based on best practice in liturgy and on the liturgical laws of the Church and must be respected:

- Readings from the sacred scriptures are not to be replaced by secular reflections or poetry of any kind. Your priest can help you pick suitable readings from the lectionary. Veritas bookshops have a range of books available with very suitable scriptures for weddings.
- Only sacred hymns, songs and psalms are to be chosen, or suitably dignified classical or traditional instrumental music. Secular songs of any kind are *not permitted* at any time while in the sacred surroundings of the Church. Selections should be discussed with your celebrant no later than two weeks before the wedding.
- If a wedding booklet is to be printed a copy should be sent to your celebrant no later than two weeks before the wedding.
- Every effort is to be made to preserve the sacred character of our Churches by maintaining a prayerful and worshipful atmosphere before, during and after the liturgy.
- Flowers and other suitable decorations are welcome. Arches, flower pillars, flower stands, ribbons etc. should be very secure and unlikely to cause any accidents. The use of damaging tacks or sticky tape on Church walls or furniture is not permitted.
- Flowers may be left in the Church for our weekend Masses as a gesture of gratitude to God and as a sign of the couple's spiritual unity with the prayers of our Sunday worshippers.
- Confetti is not permitted.

- The Church is to be left tidy and ready for regular worship at the end of the wedding.
- Photographers and videographers should take care not to distract the assembly from their prayer.
- A papal blessing of the newly-married couple may be obtained from *Veritas*, 7-8 Abbey Street, Dublin 1. A certificate of suitability must be provided by their Parish Priest. The blessing itself, of course, is free of charge, though *Veritas* do charge for the scroll, the administration and the postage. At least 3 months notice should be given.

I will be very happy to discuss any of these points with you if you have further queries or need more advice. Please let me know well in advance if you would like to arrange a wedding practice in the days before the wedding.

Some General Considerations

Couples should understand that the Church is not in any sense commercially ‘rented out’ or ‘leased’ to them, nor is the parish legally under contract of any kind to them, rather that they are to be respected and respectful guests on their wedding day in the sacred building of the Christian Community of Lisdoonvarna and Kilshanny.

The Church will be made available for the wedding in its usual condition, fit as for our usual Sunday Mass, and the parish is not liable in any way for imperfections or last-minute eventualities such as heating or lighting failures, floods, vandalism etc.

Weddings must always take place at the time agreed, bearing in mind that there may be other weddings, Masses, baptisms or funerals on the same day, and that volunteer sacristans, helpers and the local priest may have a number of other duties on that day.

The wedding is not considered to be booked until the requested documents and donations are sent to the Parish Priest of Lisdoonvarna and Kilshanny and a written or emailed confirmation has been received from him by the couple.

Please contact me at anytime to arrange a face-to-face meeting where I’ll be happy to offer any further clarifications, guidance or spiritual support to help make your wedding day a beautiful, joyful, moving and memorable expression of your love for God and for each other. May the Lord Jesus bless you both in every way as you prepare yourselves for this beautiful lifelong sacrament of self-emptying love. I remain,
Yours in the Lord,



Reverend Conor Cunningham PP VF