

Welcome to St Benedict's Parish, which includes the following Churches:

- Sacred Heart Cathedral, Hamilton;
- St Joseph's, The Junction;
- St Mary's Star of the Sea, Newcastle;
- Immaculate Heart of Mary, Tighes Hill.

Congratulations! We are delighted to help you celebrate your wedding with your family and friends.

Please contact the parish office at least six (6) months before your wedding date, to make an appointment to start your marriage preparations.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION & EDUCATION

Your wedding celebrant has a responsibility to assist you in preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage and for the life-long commitment you are entering through marriage. You are therefore asked to participate in a Marriage Preparation Program.

Currently the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is unable to offer any Marriage and Relationship Education Courses. Here are some options:

CATHOLIC ENGAGED ENCOUNTER (CEE)

Website: engagedencounter.org.au Email: engaged.encounter.nsw@gmail.com

Phone: 0408 162038

- Engaged couples – group setting at weekend workshop
- Certificate on completion
- Cost \$290 per couple not including accommodation

SMART LOVING - ONLINE COURSES

Website: smartloving.org

Engaged Online - self-directed online course

- 9 lessons x 1.5 hrs
- Recommended one lesson per week
- Certificate on completion
- Cost \$190

BreakThrough - help for marriages under stress

- 3-hour session - presented by Dr Byron and Francine Pirola - authors – Smart Loving program

FOCCUS

Website: foccusinc.com

- Assessment tool completed by couple individually
- Couples work with a facilitator to explore their relationship.

CATHOLICCARE – SYDNEY

Website: catholiccare.org Email: mre@catholiccare.org

Phone: 9509 1234

Becoming One

- The course concludes with a Sacramental Session and a Natural Fertility Service presentation offering insights into Church teachings on marriage and family life – these presentations are compulsory.

Individual Couple Sessions – Prepare-Enrich

- Intimate II
- Couples Clinics

PREPARE ENRICH

Website: prepare-enrich.com

- Assessment tool completed by couple individually
- Couples work with a facilitator to explore their relationship.

APPOINTMENTS WITH THE CELEBRANT & COMPLETING YOUR MARRIAGE DOCUMENTATION

You will need at least two (2) appointments with the celebrant to prepare for your wedding. The celebrant will help you complete the necessary documentation and assist you with the planning of the wedding ceremony. Appointments can be made by contacting the parish office on 02 4979 1101.

All documentation – Notice of Intended Marriage and the Church paperwork – must be finalised and signed **at least one month before the date of the ceremony**.

IMPORTANT: If either person has been married previously, you must advise the wedding celebrant of this ahead of your first appointment, as insufficient notice could result in your wedding date being delayed. The celebrant will advise you of any steps that might need to be undertaken in this regard.

To assist in the completion of the wedding paperwork, you will need to bring the following documents to your first meeting with the celebrant:

- FOR BOTH PERSONS: EITHER Full Birth Certificates and current Driver's Licences, OR current Passports if you hold them. *(Please note you must bring the original of your Birth Certificate, not a copy.)*
- FOR A BAPTISED CATHOLIC PERSON: A Baptism Certificate issued not more than six months prior to the date of your wedding. *(This can be obtained by contacting the Parish in which you were baptised and asking for a copy of your Baptism Certificate for the purpose of marriage.)*
- FOR A BAPTISED NON-CATHOLIC PERSON: A copy of your Baptism Certificate.
- IF APPLICABLE: Where either person has been previously married, evidence of marriage annulment or death of a former spouse.

If you do not live in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, you will need to contact your home parish and make an appointment with your local parish priest. This is in addition to making the appointment with the celebrant to plan the wedding ceremony. A marriage cannot be celebrated in one of our parish churches without the permission of the priest in the parish in which you live. This permission should be forwarded to the Parish Office at newcparish@mn.catholic.org.au or PO Box 6, The Junction NSW 2291.

COSTS FOR CHURCH WEDDINGS

Venue Charges:

Sacred Heart Cathedral, Hamilton	\$1,000
St Mary's Star of the Sea Church, Newcastle	\$1,000
St Joseph's Church, The Junction	\$600
Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Tighes Hill	\$600

For these venues, a non-refundable amount of \$300 is payable as a deposit before the first appointment with the priest. The balance of the venue charge is payable at least 14 days prior to the date of the wedding.

Flowers are optional at a cost of \$320 (price subject to change), payable at least 14 days prior to the date of the wedding.

A lack of financial resources should not preclude anyone from having a church wedding. If there are financial concerns, please speak with the parish office staff or the celebrant. The conversation will be treated with the utmost discretion.

COSTS FOR WEDDINGS HELD OUTSIDE SACRED SPACE (for example, in a park)

Non-refundable amount of \$300, payable before the first appointment with the celebrant.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

- * Credit Card: visit [**Donations and Payments - Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle**](#)
- * EFT: Bank Details Account Name: CDF
BSB: 066 739 Acc: 100008696
Ref: *Surname + dd/mm/yy* (date of wedding)
- * Make cheques payable to ‘Newcastle Catholic Parish’.
(Mail to Newcastle Catholic Parish, PO Box 6, The Junction NSW 2291.)

When using EFT or a credit card, please advise the parish office when the payment has been made.
If you would like a receipt acknowledging payment of the venue charge, we will issue this on request.

DONATIONS TO CELEBRANTS

In addition to the venue charge, it is customary to offer a donation to the wedding celebrant. This is not retained by the individual. It goes to a central fund for the support of clergy in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. It can be given to the celebrant at your appointment or at the wedding rehearsal, or directly to the parish office.

PLANNING YOUR WEDDING CEREMONY

To assist you in the planning of your wedding ceremony, please be aware of the following:

Flowers in the Church: Flowers can be arranged by our florist and will remain in the church after your ceremony concludes. The floral and other decorations are determined in accordance with the liturgical seasons of the church's year (ie. Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Ordinary Time).

Pew Decorations: If you would like decorations on the church pews, you will need to provide these yourself. Your wedding might not be the only event on the day, so you will need to make arrangements for having the decorations placed and removed in a timely manner. Decorations may only be tied to the pews with ribbon or elastic. We can't permit the use of Blutack, other adhesives, pins or thumb tacks to attach decorations to the seats.

Music for your Ceremony: We ask you to discuss your music choices with the celebrant. The following musicians regularly assist at wedding ceremonies in our parish churches and may be of assistance to you in planning the music for your wedding. Payment for their services is by arrangement between you and them.

Organist/Pianist:	Ms Anne Millard	0435 828 390
Singer:	Ms Catherine Mahony	0409 570 626

You are welcome, of course, to engage the services of other musicians and/or singers.

Music Copyright: The requirements of copyright law and regulations must be strictly adhered to. You will need to obtain the necessary permissions from the music publisher and/or recording company. The capturing of the performance of music on a video recording is illegal without the necessary permission or licence.

Order of Service: An Order of Service booklet assists your guests in following the ceremony and can be prepared and printed by you after planning with the wedding celebrant. A printed outline of the ceremony may help you with the booklet preparation and can be emailed to you on request. When you have prepared the booklet, please forward a draft copy to the parish office for approval before the final print.

Rehearsal: We recommend you have a rehearsal in the days shortly before the wedding ceremony. You can arrange this with the celebrant.

ON THE DAY

Please be aware the church might be booked for other weddings or services on the same day. Starting the wedding ceremony at the agreed time is important, to avoid affecting other events.

Important: The use of rice, confetti, flower petals, dried flowers, nuts – or any product of this nature – is not allowed in our parish churches and grounds.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Please notify the parish office if you change your home address, email address and/or phone number.

Please also notify the parish office if the wedding is postponed or cancelled.

It is very easy to get caught up in planning the practicalities of the wedding. Remember, though, to take time to reflect on what the Sacrament of Marriage is about. While your wedding day will be very special, it is just the beginning of your commitment to share the rest of your life with the one you love.

May you enjoy celebrating your marriage in one of our parish churches.

We wish you a blessed and happy life.