

STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE

God the Father has created marriage as a mutual and exclusive covenant between one man and one woman, by which they establish between themselves a loving and intimate partnership of their whole life, which of its own nature is ordered both to the well-being of the spouses themselves and to the procreation and education of children. It is a true vocation entered into for life, for what God has joined together no one can put asunder. Our Lord Jesus Christ has raised marriage between two baptised people to the dignity of a sacrament.

The Church welcomes with joy those who wish to marry in accordance with her teaching. At the same time, the Church is aware of the many pressures of modern life which can endanger their commitment, their relationship and their family life. She is constantly concerned to help those who wish to marry to be prepared as fully as they can be to make this loving and lifelong commitment. For this reason:

1. A couple who wish to marry should speak to their parish priest at least six months before their proposed wedding date, and should not make any other arrangements concerning their wedding until they have spoken to him.
2. The parish priest is responsible for preparing couples for marriage. He will often be assisted in this important work by a deacon, a group of parishioners or members of other organisations.
3. Any marriage involving a Catholic should be celebrated in their parish church. With the permission of their parish priest, the marriage may be celebrated in another parish. A marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic may only be celebrated in a non-Catholic church with a dispensation, which will only be granted for a serious reason.
4. If a Catholic wishes to marry a non-Catholic, the Catholic will be reminded of their obligation to preserve their faith, and will be invited to make a sincere promise to do all in their power to have their children baptised and brought up in the Catholic faith. The non-Catholic partner will be informed of this promise, but will not be asked to make any such promise.

All couples preparing for marriage need and are entitled to receive the support of the Church, so that they will be strengthened by the Holy Spirit as they prepare for, celebrate, and live out the commitment which they will make at their wedding. The Church thanks all those married people who show great constancy and faithfulness in their vocation, and prays that their example may inspire all who are preparing to marry.

This statement is appointed to be read at Mass or published in the parish newsletter in February and October each year

Rt Rev Patrick McKinney
Bishop of Nottingham
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