

Information for brides

The following notes are intended to help you plan your wedding here at St Peter's, Stonyhurst. Make sure you have a firm booking by getting your local Parish Priest to complete the Wedding Enquiry Form.

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, then it is lovely to have a full Catholic Mass with communion. However, where one party is not Catholic, a wedding service might be more appropriate. A full Mass typically takes an hour and a quarter, whereas a service will be about 45 minutes. Maybe 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 priest, or you know your own parish priest well, you can invite them to preside. It's wonderful when the celebrant can add a personal touch.

Do I need to print an order of service?

Most couples like to construct their own order of service. This is not necessary, but you can give it to your guests as a souvenir. If you decide not to do this, you can use the hymn books provided in the church.

Choosing the readings for the ceremony

You are welcome to choose the readings that will be used in your ceremony, and choose who will read them. Again, the priest celebrating the wedding can help with this. There is normally a reading from the Old Testament, followed by a psalm or suitable hymn. Then a reading from St Paul followed by an Alleluia verse. The priest gets to read the Gospel, but the couple can choose which one.

Bidding prayers

You are encouraged to construct your own bidding prayers (or intercessions) and choose who will read these. Again, the celebrant can give some guidance here. As well as praying for the couples' happiness, you can pray for those who have helped you reach this day. Also, you can pray for anyone who would have liked to attend, but cannot be present.

Music

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

The playing of pre-recorded music is not permitted at Stonyhurst. If you know any musicians you are most welcome to invite them to come and play or sing at your wedding. However, if you are looking for an organist, the following have lots of experience playing here:

Mr Greg Mann (Director of Music at SMH) 07545 087968

Mr Andrew Henderson (Director of Music at Stonyhurst) 01254 827 086

Mr Stewart Whillis (Organist, St John the Divine, Hurst Green) 01772 423035.

The organist you choose will advise you about what music might be appropriate. Please negotiate the fee directly with the organist you choose.

Some couples have brought a choir from their home parish. You are free to do this if you wish. While 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 the couple come from different religious backgrounds, the music can reflect this.

Can I write my own vows?

This is NOT possible in the Catholic rite of marriage. However, there are options available. Please speak to the celebrant of the wedding and he will help you choose which options might be more suitable.

Flowers and decorating the church

St Peter's is very beautiful and does not need much decoration. However, you can if you wish bring a display of flowers, or decorate the pew ends with ribbons. You should arrange for such decorations to be taken away after the ceremony. The florist the college uses is The Flower Shop, Wellgate, Clitheroe - 01200 422534.

Use of confetti

The use of confetti or rose petals is NOT permitted within the church or within the grounds of Stonyhurst. You can 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. Have a word with the priest to make sure this access is open.

The photographer

Of course, you want to record this special day with some photographs. There are some limits that the photographer needs to observe. St Peter's is in the grounds of Stonyhurst College and during term time, when the pupils of the College are present, it is necessary to observe some restrictions, e.g. pupils should not be photographed/videoed and access to certain areas of the grounds is not permitted. The use of drones is also not permitted. Ask the photographer to have a word with the celebrant before the ceremony.

The Videographer

A video of the wedding is possible, especially if some family members live too far away to attend on the wedding day. Again, limits apply, so make sure they speak to the celebrant beforehand.

Is a reception at Stonyhurst possible?

Former students of the college might be able to book a part of Stonyhurst as the venue for their reception. Please speak to Rebecca Cowley in Stonyhurst Enterprises (01254 827014).

Booking a rehearsal slot

Most couples like to run through the ceremony at a rehearsal a day or two before the wedding. Speak to your celebrant to make an arrangement for this.

Further help:

Redemptorist Publications have a useful booklet called "Your Wedding":

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