



Updated: May 2025

## **GUIDELINES FOR WEDDINGS AT ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL**

In order to have a wedding at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, it is necessary that the marriage should take place according to the rites of the Catholic Church. The requirements of the Catholic Church for the celebration of marriage may differ from those of the civil law. At least one of the parties must be a Catholic, and both bride and groom must be free and capable of marriage as the Church understands it.

### **PRIEST OR DEACON CELEBRANT**

Those from outside the Cathedral Parish need to arrange for their own Catholic priest or deacon celebrant who must possess the appropriate ecclesiastical faculties. In this case, couples should first contact a priest or deacon of the Catholic parish in which one of them resides. The priest or deacon celebrant will guide them through the process of preparation and will be responsible for all the required Church and Government documentation.

The letter of Permission and/or Acceptance from the priest or deacon confirming his availability for the chosen date and time needs to be presented in order to secure the booking. Couples will need to give to the officiating priest or deacon at least six months notice of their wedding.

If you have difficulty finding a priest or deacon to celebrate your wedding, please contact the Cathedral office.

Documents needed for priest or deacon celebrant will include:

- Baptism Certificate (issued within a period of six months prior to the wedding).

- A full copy of Certificate of Birth or Passport, a current non-Australian Passport or Certificate of Birth will suffice for those born overseas (must be officially translated into English).
- Marriage declaration forms will be completed in consultation with the priest or deacon.

### **NUPTIAL MASS OR WEDDING CEREMONY**

The form of the wedding ceremony will be decided in discussion with the celebrant. Since a wedding (Ceremony or Nuptial Mass) is the official liturgy of the Church, it must be in accord with official rites of the Catholic Church. Therefore the readings and prayers must be from the official liturgical books.

It is helpful for couples to have printed service booklets to encourage guests to participate in the service. You should be aware that printed material in the booklets should comply with copyright law.

### **PRE-MARRIAGE EDUCATION COURSES**

These are recommended by both the Church and Government and should be discussed with your celebrant as soon as possible.

### **SPIRITUAL PREPARATION**

Proper spiritual preparation for the Sacrament of Matrimony is important and your celebrant and/or local parish priest will assist you with this.

### **BOOKINGS FOR WEDDINGS**

A proposed wedding date, time and location can be checked on the Cathedral's website and online enquiry request system under Liturgy & Sacraments and weddings. The Special Liturgies Officer will be in contact via email shortly after, to confirm availability and details.

For follow-up wedding questions or other enquiries, the Special Liturgies Officer can be reached at the Cathedral office on (02) 9220 0453 or email [weddings@stmaryscathedral.org.au](mailto:weddings@stmaryscathedral.org.au)

The Cathedral's Main Altar or Lady Chapel (if the Main Altar isn't already booked) is available for weddings on Saturdays at 2pm and 4pm, or on Fridays at 3pm. There are no weddings on Sundays or Public Holidays.

From 2026, the Cathedral will hold weddings at the Main Altar or Lady Chapel during the season of Lent except for Holy Week.

SPECIAL NOTE: No wedding bookings will be accepted for the Cathedral Crypt until further notice.

A tentative booking can be made at the date and time of your Cathedral office appointment, and by completing the wedding application form then returning the original with your priest acceptance form, local parish permission form (if you and your fiancé/fiancée reside outside of the Cathedral parish), full payment and signed original acceptance (page 14) of the Cathedral's wedding guidelines document. All booking requests will be reviewed by the Dean at St Mary's Cathedral and responded to in 14 business days from submission of all your documentation.

Wedding bookings are applicable to the specified day, time and location as selected in your signed application form.

The Cathedral will remain open to worshipers and visitors during a wedding. People visiting the main Cathedral who are not guests of the wedding will be restricted by security to the rear of the Cathedral. Measures will be in place to minimise distractions.

### **SCHEDULE OF CHARGES**

For a St Mary's Cathedral fee schedule, please refer to the Cathedral's website and online enquiry request system for weddings.

Please note the following:

- \$1610 will be retained if a booking is cancelled with less than 3 months notice.
- \$805 will be retained if a booking is cancelled with more than 3 months notice, but less than 6 months notice.

- \$550 will be retained if a booking is cancelled with more than 6 months notice, but less than 12 months notice.
- \$295 will be retained if a booking is cancelled with more than 12 months notice.

### **OFFERINGS FOR THE PRIEST or DEACON CELEBRANT**

It is usual to make an offering to the priest or deacon who celebrates the wedding. Please note this offering is not included in the Cathedral wedding fee.

### **WEDDING REHEARSALS**

Due to the nature of the Cathedral timetable, wedding rehearsals are scheduled for **Tuesday-Friday** afternoons between **2:00pm and 4:30pm** pending calendar availability.

### **PARKING**

Wedding vehicle drop off/pick up for the Main Altar is located on College Street and permitted within the Sydney council signage area. Wedding cars are only permitted to stay for the duration of your service.

There is no parking in the Cathedral grounds. Public Parking Stations are located behind St Mary's Cathedral, underneath Cathedral Square (at the Southern end of the Cathedral) and in the Domain.

### **CATHEDRAL REGULATIONS**

#### *Punctuality*

It is necessary that the wedding commence at your allocated time, therefore it is not acceptable for the bridal party to be late.

Please arrive at the Cathedral at least **15 minutes before** your scheduled time of marriage to allow sufficient time for photographs and/or video.

Late arrival can cause serious inconvenience to your guests, the next wedding party and other scheduled Cathedral events. Late arrival may result in a shortened ceremony by your priest. If late arrival is 20 minutes after your scheduled wedding time, the Cathedral organist, musicians and/or bell ringers will leave the premises and NOT proceed accordingly.

### *Throwing of confetti*

We regret that the use of confetti, rice, flower petals etc. is NOT permitted within St Mary's Cathedral or on the property.

### *Flower Decorations*

Only two floral displays are permitted before the Cathedral's Main Altar. Floral arrangements should be in line with the aesthetic of St Mary's Cathedral as a sacred place of worship, and the Altar area remains clearly visible to the congregation.

Pew decorations are NOT permitted within St Mary's Cathedral.

### *Candles*

Decorative candles other than marriage candles are not allowed in the Cathedral. If you intend to have a marriage unity candle and family candles, a dish must be provided to prevent dripping of wax on the sanctuary floor and furnishings; these respective candles will be placed on a separate table near the Altar area and not on the Altar.

### *Doves*

The release of doves after a Wedding Ceremony or Nuptial Mass is NOT permitted within St Mary's Cathedral or on the property.

The City of Sydney does NOT allow the release of doves within the CBD (which includes Cathedral Square) and you may be fined by council if a dove supplier is on the premises for a Wedding.

### *Balloons*

Balloons are NOT permitted within St Mary's Cathedral or on the property.

### *Bubbles*

Bubbles are NOT permitted within St Mary's Cathedral or on the property.

### *External Musicians and/or Dancing*

External musicians of any kind e.g. drummers, flutist, harpist, bagpipers etc. and/or dancing is NOT permitted within St Mary's Cathedral or on the property at any time.

*OTHER ITEMS INTENDED FOR USE WITHIN THE NUPTIALS OR MASS:*

Non-liturgical items such as a wagon, pushcart or mini electric car for page boys and/or flower girls are NOT permitted. Please utilise these types of items at your reception venue.

*Photography, Video and Content Creator for Social Media*

Your photographer/s, videographer/s and/or social media personnel are welcome in the Cathedral to record your ceremony provided they are discreet. Photography and videography are only allowed to be taken from specific areas in the Cathedral and NOT on the Main Altar and Sanctuary **(please see Cathedral map reference on page 13)**.

Flash photography is NOT permitted during a ceremony. Please inform your wedding guests of this information prior, and give the photographer(s)/videographer(s)/social media personnel a copy of the recommended notes for photographs and video. Any extra lighting (including flood lighting) is NOT permitted. Please be aware successful video in the Cathedral is difficult to achieve due to the changing light. Photographers, videographers and social media personnel must consult with Cathedral staff prior to a wedding.

Please note: We do not permit the use of flashes or additional lighting as it is a distraction to the celebrant and people in prayer. The sacrament of marriage is a very important liturgical celebration and as such should not be disrupted with the flashing of lights or with people running around for the best photo opportunity. The taking of photos should always be discreet and respectful for not only the celebrant but to the couple exchanging their vows.

*Live Streaming*

The Cathedral's Main Altar has the facility to live stream a Wedding on the St Mary's Cathedral YouTube channel for guests who cannot attend. A Cathedral vision operator would be required to control the camera vision. Request for this service will need to be detailed and associated costs will be passed on to the couple via email.

### *Drone Photography*

In accordance with St Mary's Cathedral policy, the Cathedral does NOT approve the use of drones both inside the Cathedral AND the land and airspace surrounding the outside of the Cathedral (**Cathedral Property**) in circumstances where the drone is operated for the purpose of a wedding or for wedding photography or videography.

If a drone is found operating on Cathedral Property, St Mary's Cathedral may report it to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority.

## **NOTES FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS, VIDEO PERSONNEL AND CONTENT CREATOR FOR SOCIAL MEDIA**

### ***EQUIPMENT:***

Please note the equipment allowed/not allowed on the Cathedral site is as follows:

- No entry by a photographer, videographer or social media personnel onto the altar area (the Sanctuary) or the pulpit
- Maximum 3 x tripods
- No additional lighting (floodlights, flash lights during the ceremony)
- No hand held reflector

No other equipment/infrastructure is permitted.

Use of any additional equipment (including, but not limited to, laptops, props, tables) will breach the conditions of consent to film or photograph at St Mary's Cathedral and may result in your removal from St Mary's Cathedral site.

Please ensure that photographers, videographers and/or social media personnel have proper identification with them (i.e. business card) to show their capacity as a wedding photographer, videographer and content creator.

## MUSIC AT WEDDINGS

### *Bookings:*

Music booking forms must be submitted no later than three months prior to your wedding date. Upon receipt of the booking form, couples will be issued an invoice which must be paid within 30 days. Failure to comply with these terms will result in the termination of your booking.

You must contact the Cathedral Music Administrator at (02) 9220 0481 or email [music@stmaryscathedral.org.au](mailto:music@stmaryscathedral.org.au) to arrange music at your wedding and discuss any selections.

The Cathedral is a large, resonant space. The Cathedral organs are uniquely designed to fill this space adequately and the Cathedral organists are professional musicians who are experts at providing appropriate liturgical music.

### **COUPLES ARE NOT PERMITTED TO BOOK OR SUPPLY THEIR OWN MUSICIANS IN ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.**

The music chosen should reflect the dignity of your marriage ceremony and the Cathedral's own liturgy. We have provided a list of suggested music for you, which we hope you will find helpful. While you are welcome to suggest pieces which are not on this list, please remember that film music, popular love songs and pop music in general, any songs or hymns in a pop style (e.g. Hillsong) are not suited to the Cathedral's liturgical style and not permitted, and that the decision of the Cathedral's Director of Music is final.

It is not permitted to play recorded music at the Cathedral.

Only Cathedral organists may play the Cathedral organs.

*Soloists and Choir:*

The Music department can arrange a professional soloist to sing at your wedding. If this is your preference, please indicate this on your booking form. Pending availability, a choir can also be booked to sing. Please note that the choir can accommodate only one wedding booking per day (the Cathedral Choristers are not available to sing at weddings). This is arranged on a first come, first served basis and will be confirmed once payment is received in full.

*Please note for any music cancellations outside of one month from your wedding date, fifty percent of your fee will be retained. Any music bookings cancelled within one month of your wedding date will forfeit the entire fee.*

Music at Eastern Rite Weddings (Maronite, Melkite etc.)

All of the above music guidelines apply to Eastern Rite weddings held in the Cathedral, with one adaptation:

Eastern Rite weddings require an experienced cantor to sing the liturgical responses in answer to the Celebrant. As St Mary's Cathedral is a Latin Rite Church, its professional singers are not Eastern Rite Cantors. Therefore couples are required to source and book their own Eastern Rite Cantor to sing at their wedding. This can be done in consultation with the priest who will celebrate the wedding.

Eastern Rite Cantors are permitted to sing ONLY the liturgical responses of the Rite. They are NOT permitted to sing other songs. Additional music; before the service (bridal entrance), during the service (signing of the register) can be played by the Cathedral organist. Otherwise the Cathedral's Music Department can supply one of its staff singers to sing liturgically appropriate sacred music during these parts of the service.

A Cathedral organist must be booked for all weddings with music held in the Cathedral, including Eastern Rite Weddings. It is the responsibility of Cantors to bring and give the organist sheet music for any responses which the organist should accompany during a ceremony.

## **Rules around the Copyright of Music**

The majority of music, which is played and sung at St Mary's Cathedral, is copyright free.

As it is the responsibility of St Mary's Cathedral to hold the copyright licence (since all music is performed and produced here onsite), the following actions and processes must be adhered to:

- Only pre-approved music from the Cathedral's own repertoire can be played as per the copyright agreement
- Should other music be requested to be played (e.g.: music outside of the Cathedral's own repertoire), they must first seek the approval of the Cathedral's Music Director and then the Music Director will seek copyright for that piece of music at the cost of the third party
- Should an individual request a copy/recording of a special service (e.g.: Wedding) for their own purposes, any music which falls under copyright must be deleted from the recording.

St Mary's Cathedral holds a CCLI licence which covers live music performed as part of a religious service within St Mary's Cathedral. This licence also covers the live streaming (by St Mary's Cathedral) of services, and the music performed (mostly!).

## **Regarding the issue of copyright over any music which is sung or performed as part of a livestream or recording.**

- The general rule is that a piece of music is in the public domain if it is over 70 years since the death of the author/composer or the date of first publication of the lyrics/composition. So copyright permission is not required in these cases.
- The Church streaming license permits livestreaming or making a recording of Mass available **only on the website or social media platform of the licensee** – for instance, where St Mary's Cathedral has a streaming license it can livestream or place a

recording of Mass on its website or Facebook page but not on another parish's page or even on the Archdiocese's page.

- Should anybody wish to record (video) any live performance within St Mary's Cathedral and make it available online they will need to obtain a licence from APRA/AMCOS. If this is a recording of a live performance, they will also need the written permission of all performers to record their performance. They should let the performers know exactly how the recording is going to be used.

### **The Performers Rights include:**

- The right to control whether or not their performance is recorded or communicated online.
- The right to decide how the recording of their performance is used.
- Ownership of copyright in any sound recordings of their live performance
- Moral rights relating to their performance.

A performance as defined in the Copyright Act includes both dramatic and musical performance as well as public lectures, conferences and speeches.

You do not necessarily need to get consent from members in the audience/congregation who might incidentally be included in the recording. However, it is recommended that you inform members of the audience that the event will be recorded so that individuals can request that they not be photographed, filmed or otherwise recorded.

If you are recording your event and the event includes third party copyright material for example music, films or images, either you or the presenter will need to ensure that they have the necessary rights to use the material and allow it to be included in the recording.

## **CATHEDRAL BELLS**

The Cathedral Bells are rung manually by a team of skilled men and women from the St Mary's Basilica Society of Change Ringers.

The bells are rung for 20 minutes prior to the scheduled start time of your Wedding Ceremony or Nuptial Mass AND 20 minutes afterwards. Please refer to the Fee Schedule for information on the number of bells to be rung. Please note that punctuality is crucial.

To book the Cathedral Bells, please complete and return the booking form (.pdf available for download on the Cathedral website) at least three months before the wedding date.

Your booking will be confirmed by letter.

St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica Society of Change Ringers  
C/- St Mary's Cathedral  
St Mary's Road  
Sydney NSW 2000  
or phone Margaret Hill at 0401 209 521

*Please note for Cathedral Bells cancellations, a week's notice from your scheduled wedding date must be provided otherwise \$100 will be retained of the fee. If the bridal party is 20 minutes late after their scheduled wedding time on the day, bell ringers will leave the Cathedral premises and your entire fee will be forfeited.*

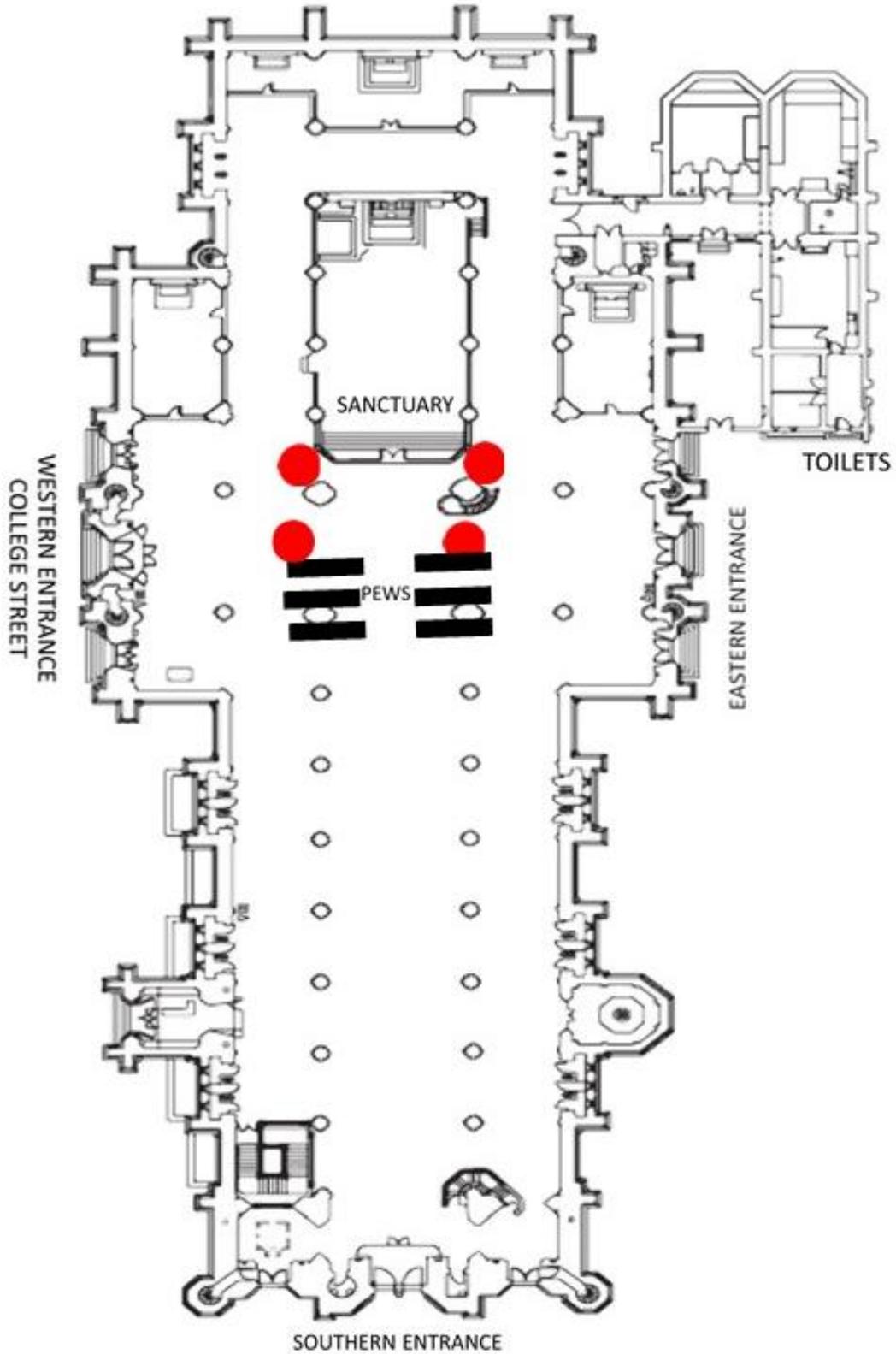
## **BELLS FEE SCHEDULE**

8 Ringers:	<b>\$600.00</b>
10 Ringers:	<b>\$750.00</b>

An invoice and receipt will be issued for all costs relating to the wedding. Please be sure to include details of your wedding with the payment.

Please see below for designated photo and video areas, shown in **RED**.

**MAIN ALTAR:**





## ACCEPTANCE OF THE WEDDING GUIDELINES

We agree to comply with the Guidelines for weddings at St Mary's Cathedral (**Guidelines**) otherwise this will affect our wedding on the day in accordance with all the preceding information (pages 1-14) provided.

We agree to provide a copy of the Guidelines to third parties assisting us with our wedding (e.g. wedding planners, florists, photographers, videographers, social media personnel, hire cars etc.) (**Consultants**). We will ensure that our Consultants comply with the Guidelines.

We undertake to rectify any damage we, our guests or our Consultants cause at St Mary's Cathedral associated with our wedding.

Please sign to indicate your agreement with the above:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

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Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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