

## CHAPLAINCY OF AQUITAINE

### MARRIAGES

We are always pleased when couples ask for their wedding to be blessed by the church. The first step in booking a wedding is to fill in a Marriage Application Form. Dates should be booked as far in advance as possible,

A religious service held in France must be preceded by a legal/civil marriage ceremony. This can be in the commune in which there is a family residence. To arrange a civil marriage in France, contact the local *maire*. If there are problems about residence, the legal ceremony can be performed in the UK, or other country of residence. Before conducting a wedding service, we will need to see the marriage certificate.

Because all couples, including French Catholics, will be legally married before a church wedding takes place, the church wedding can be a full ceremony, almost identical to a church wedding in England.

The service can be held at one of our church centres, or by arrangement in another church or chapel, (though in the Dordogne we are expected to use the churches where we regularly hold services). Most priests and pastors are happy to grant permission. In those cases the couple are expected to make the arrangements with the local church - and sometimes also the *mairie* - and to inform the Chaplain of the name and address of the priest/pastor responsible.

When the wedding/blessing takes place in one of our church centres, we can often arrange an organist - and *sometimes* a choir. In other churches this may be more difficult. Not all French churches have organs and those that do vary in quality

It is also possible to have a wedding or wedding blessing in other venues eg chateaux or garden, if the premises are suitable for conducting a religious service.

Normally, the service will be taken by one of our clergy or by a Reader. To use another Anglican priest from outside the Chaplaincy, permission *must* be obtained first from the Chaplain. The Chaplain or Officiant will want to meet the couple as soon as convenient to discuss Christian Marriage and consider the form and content of the service. If the couple live outside this Chaplaincy, it is helpful for them to inform their local priest or minister of their desire to marry here and in some cases it will be appropriate for him/her to prepare the couple.

The forms in use are the Marriage Service from *Common Worship*, or the form for "Prayer and Dedication after Civil Marriage". Bilingual services can be arranged. In some cases it is possible to have joint Anglican and Catholic or Eglise Réformée services. It is usual to have two or three hymns. It is desirable that at least one reading from the Bible is chosen. Other suitable readings and music can be included -- please consult the officiating minister at an early stage

Fees charged are in line with those charged in the rest of the Diocese of Europe and are regularly adjusted to take account of inflation. These go towards the cost of running the Chaplaincy. The current fee is 500 €, plus travel expenses incurred. There is also usually a charge for the use of the church (60 – 100 euros), which goes to the local curé or Maire. In addition, there may be an organist's fee and expenses (and a fee for any choir). These and other charges should be agreed when initial enquiries are being made. Fees should be paid two weeks before the wedding.

April 2011