

POLICY 2.1.4 The Use of Catholic Churches and Church Sites for Non-Catholic Services

As a rule, Catholic churches are for Catholic services. It happens occasionally in the Archdiocese that a non-Catholic asks to use the Catholic church in the community for a wedding or a funeral or other sacred ritual. In many instances a larger than usual attendance is anticipated, and the Catholic church is the largest such venue in the community.

In general, there is no prohibition to such fraternal sharing of facilities. We must ensure, at the same time, that the celebration does not cause confusion in people's minds about the Catholic Church's position on the rite that is being celebrated, even though it is acknowledged not to be a Catholic service.

In such circumstances, permission is always to be sought from the Chancellor, the Vicar General or the Archbishop. No activity shall take place in the sanctuary which is incompatible with the sacred nature.

If the intended use of the Catholic church is for a funeral, no application form is needed. The parish priest or other responsible person need only contact the Chancellor, Vicar General or Archbishop and provide the details of the proposed funeral.

In the case of a wedding ceremony, the parish priest or Catholic lay minister who brings forward such a request must first make a sufficient enquiry to ensure that the proposed wedding is a valid wedding in the eyes of the Church. Therefore:

- Neither the bride nor the groom can be a Catholic.
- Neither the bride nor the groom can have been married previously, without having received a declaration of nullity of marriage if the spouse is still living.

The application form, Form 2.1.4.a, must also be completed and submitted to the Chancellor, Vicar General or Archbishop for a final decision.