

NIMMA began in 1974. We provide support and information for mixed marriage couples in Northern Ireland. Each year we organise a number of social events and a residential weekend for mixed marriage couples and families. We also produce a quarterly newsletter. Please ask for further details.

**NIMMA supports couples who are united in love across traditional Christian divisions and promotes acceptance of these relationships within Northern Ireland society. We will also help those in mixed marriages of other Faiths.**

- [www.mcmarriage.org.uk](http://www.mcmarriage.org.uk) is the website for Muslim / Christian marriages.
- Further information can be obtained in the book "Mixed Marriage in Ireland" available from NIMMA at a cost of £3.00 inc. P&P.
- 'Interchurch Marriage in Ireland' Pamphlet 7 in the Catalyst Series by Anne & William Odling-Smee is available from The Good Book Shop, 61 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2QH.
- 'Ministering to Interchurch Couples' by the Irish Interchurch Meeting, is available from the Inter-Church Centre, 48 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6AZ. Tel 9066 3145 [irish.churches@btconnect.com](mailto:irish.churches@btconnect.com)
- The Association of Interchurch Families produces a journal. For subscription details & other information contact: AIF, Bastille Court, 2 Paris Garden, London SE1 8ND. Tel: 020 7654 7254  
[www.interchurchfamilies.org.uk](http://www.interchurchfamilies.org.uk)  
email [info@interchurchfamilies.org.uk](mailto:info@interchurchfamilies.org.uk)
- Interchurch Family Associations web site is [www.aifw.org](http://www.aifw.org)
- The web site for the Association of Interchurch Families Ireland is <http://luggage.connect.ie/~aif/>



Northern Ireland  
Mixed Marriage Association

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**Office hours**

9.30-12.30 Monday - Thursday

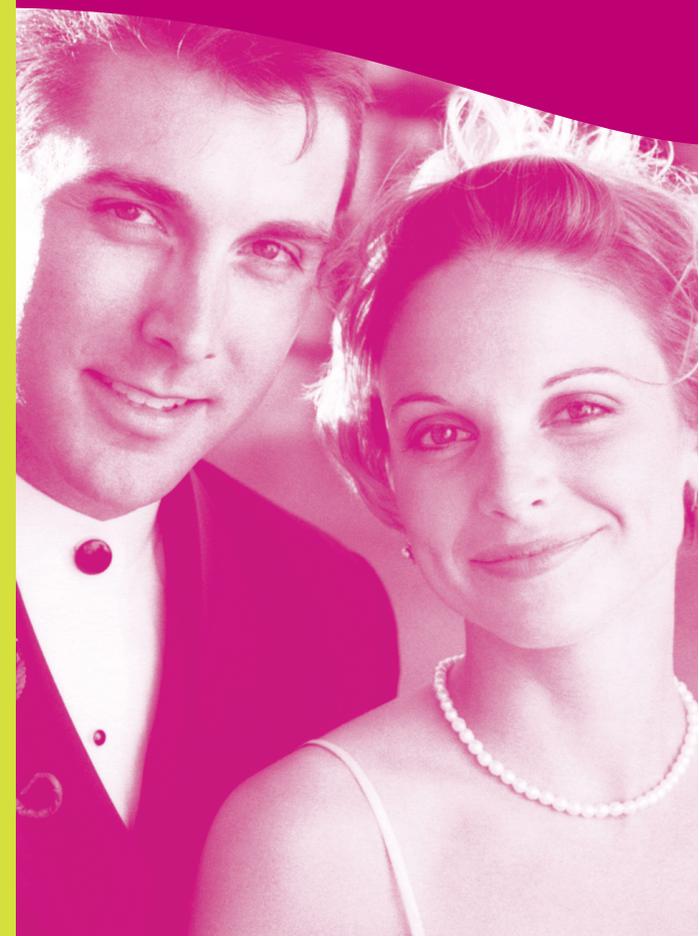
(Appointments outside these hours can be arranged and an answerphone service is also available.)

March 2004



Northern Ireland  
Mixed Marriage Association

*Getting*  
**Getting married**  
*married*



**Congratulations on your decision to get married! It can be a daunting thing to contemplate a mixed marriage in Northern Ireland and we at NIMMA would like to offer you support at this time. No doubt you have some concerns and questions about the process of getting married. We hope that this leaflet will help you.**

### **1. In which church do you want to get married?**

There is a flexible tradition for the ceremony to take place in the church of the bride. Whichever church it is, the Roman Catholic partner will need to ask for permission to marry someone who is not a Roman Catholic (we can give you further information about this).

### **Regarding the rearing of children:**

Section 8.1 of the Irish Roman Catholic Bishops Directory on Mixed Marriage states that **“The religious upbringing of the children is the joint responsibility of both parents.** The obligations of the Catholic party do not, and cannot, cancel out, or in any way call into question, the conscientious duties of the other party.”

The Roman Catholic partner will be asked to give an assurance that he/she will “do what you can **within the unity of your partnership** to see that the children will be baptised and brought up in the Catholic faith.” The Protestant partner should be informed of this.

### **If in a Roman Catholic Church**

- A1** Many couples choose not to have a Nuptial Mass but to concentrate on a lengthened more focussed marriage service
- A2** Decide if you would like a Protestant minister/pastor to assist. (Ensure that the priest is comfortable to invite him/her.)
- A3** Ask for options available regarding readings, readers etc (see ‘Ministering to Interchurch Couples’ – details at back of pamphlet).

### **If in a Protestant Church**

- B1** The first approach should be made to the local minister/pastor.
- B2** The Catholic partner must ask the parish priest for a further document called a Dispensation from Form (we can give you further information).
- B3** If granted, decide if you want a Catholic priest to assist. (Ensure that the Protestant minister is comfortable to invite him)
- B4** Ask for options available regarding readings, readers etc (see ‘Ministering to Interchurch Couples’ from IICM – details at back of pamphlet.)

### **2. Marriage in a Registry Office**

This is legal in the eyes of the State and of the Protestant Churches but is “invalid” in Roman Catholic Canon Law.

### **3. Marrying a Divorced Person**

- 3.1 Divorce is not recognised by the Roman Catholic Church. It may be possible to apply to have the original marriage annulled by the Roman Catholic Church.
- 3.2 It may be possible to be married in a Protestant Church (see B1) subject to certain conditions.
- 3.3 It is possible to be married in a Registry Office (see 2 above).

### **4. Legal Registration**

As from 14 January 2004, it is the responsibility of the couple to apply for a marriage licence from the Registrar in whose district they reside. The proposed marriage should be discussed with priests/ministers first before applying to the registrar. Further details of legal obligations can be obtained from the NIMMA office.

### **5. Pre-Marriage Courses**

These are offered by ACCORD (Catholic Marriage Care Service) Tel 3833 4781

- **Co-operation between the couple and clergy of both traditions is encouraged.**
- **You may find it helpful to talk to other couples who are in inter-church marriages. If you don’t know anyone personally, NIMMA couples will be happy to meet with you.**
- **Wherever you wish to get married remember that the marriage of an inter-church couple provides a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the richness of two traditions.**