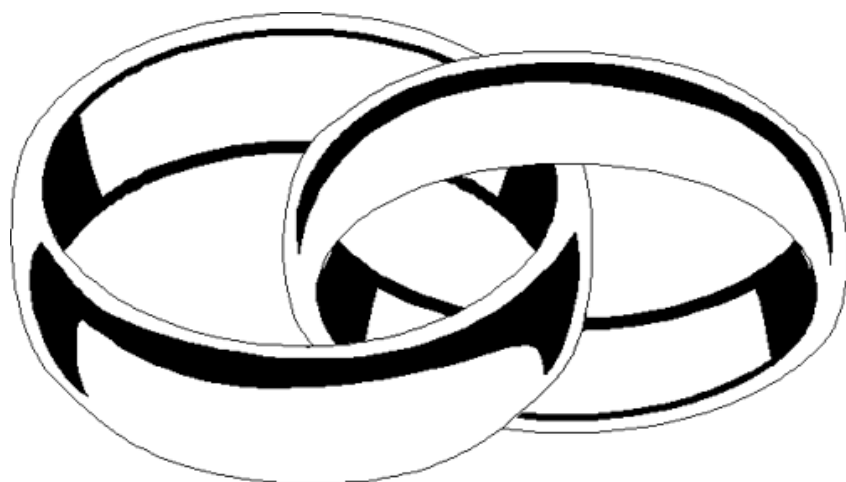




# Wedding Planning Book

## **CHURCH OF ST. PETER**

1801 West Broadway  
P.O. Box 522  
St. Peter, MN 56082-0522  
(507) 931-1628  
Fax (507) 931-2977





## INDEX

### **YELLOW TAB:**

- Prayer
- Preface Letter from Pastor/Pastoral Team
- What is Marriage?
- Rules and requirements for a Valid Catholic Marriage

### **RED TAB:**

- Pre-Marriage Preparation
  - Requirements of the Diocese of New Ulm
  - Scheduling your Wedding
  - Baptismal Certificates
  - Marriage License
  - Reconciliation/Spiritual Preparation
  - Previous Marriages
- Marriage Ceremony
  - Marriage Ceremony Forms
  - Music
  - Scripture Readings
  - The Vows
- Liturgical Ministers
  - Witnesses
  - Groomsmen and Bridesmaids
  - Flower Girls and Ring Bearers
  - Ushers/Ministers of Hospitality
  - Altar Servers
  - Lectors
  - Ministers of Holy Communion
  - Musicians and Song leaders
- Other Items
  - Processional
  - Seating Arrangements
  - Aisle Runner
  - Bridal Veils
  - Bridal and Grooms Rooms
  - Food and Drink
  - Flowers
  - Photographers and Pictures
  - Reception
  - Rice, Confetti, Bubbles, Etc.
  - Wedding Booklet/Program
- Guest Ministers/Priests
- Priests at Your Wedding in a Non-Catholic Church
- Invitations to the Priest
- Marriage Offering
- Parish Registration
- Simplicity

Cohabitation/Sexual Activity before Marriage  
Natural Family Planning  
The Unity Candle

**CLEAR TAB:**

Marriage Celebration Planning Sheet  
Prayers from the Roman Missal (For during Mass)  
Opening Prayers (For weddings without Mass)  
Readings of the Liturgy  
The Wedding Ceremony  
    Vows  
    Blessing of Rings  
Nuptial Blessing (For weddings without Mass)  
Intercessory Prayers of the Faithful  
Lectors List  
Eucharistic Ministers List  
Altar Servers List  
Guidelines for Photographers  
Church of St. Peter floor plan

**GREEN TAB:**

Recommended Music for Weddings  
Suggested Music Personnel

**PINK TAB:**

City Map of St. Peter

## Prayer of an Engaged Couple

O God, by Your power You have made everything out of nothing and created us in Your own image. We thank You for the wonderful gift of our love which allows us to build a true communion, as we strive to remain ever open to You, the Source of all love.

Lord Jesus, look upon us as we prepare for our lives together as husband and wife. We ask for Your blessing that we will continue to love and accept each other unconditionally. Make us generous in giving and humble in receiving. Enable us to communicate to one another all our joys, sufferings, and desires, and all our hopes, sorrows, and difficulties.

Grant us the insight to realize that soon our unique love will be caught up and transformed in Your boundless love; for we will no longer be merely a man and woman in love, but husband and wife. Give us the power of Your Love that we may forget self and live for each other so that we may have truly one spirit, in preparation for the time when You will send us children to add to our union and love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Author Unknown)



## PREFACE

Congratulations and best wishes on your engagement. We rejoice with you in your intention to commit yourselves to each other in a Sacramental Marriage.

Your marriage is very important. We are happy that you intend to make your vows to each other in the presence of God and our community. Together we will worship our God and thank Him for His love for us.

Because you are asking us to allow you to be married in our parish community, we expect the Catholic party to be regularly and actively involved in communal worship. The same God who calls you to express your commitment to each other in sacramental marriage calls you also to pray together and worship him in this community. Christian marriage is prepared for and continually nurtured by your coming together with God's people to listen to the Word, to offer praise, and be strengthened at the Eucharistic table.

We offer you this booklet to help you in planning your wedding day. You will find many of your questions answered regarding your wedding along with some proposals of new ideas and alternatives to make your wedding special and personal. I want to work with you in preparing a meaningful and personal celebration. For additional information, please visit Catholic Brides Website at [www.catholicbrides.com](http://www.catholicbrides.com), [www.foryourmarriage.org](http://www.foryourmarriage.org), or [www.catholicweddinghelp.com](http://www.catholicweddinghelp.com). We wish your wedding to be free of disappointments, frustrations, and embarrassments, so we have noted things that have helped other couples, our things we have learned from our experiences. We are pleased to work with you in preparing for your religious celebration.

Engagement is a time when you, the prospective bride and groom, grow in faith, communication, compromising skills, and sensitivity to each other. Your wedding preparation provides an excellent way of growing in love and demonstrating that love by respecting each other's points of view and feelings. It is a time to 'give' in love rather than to insist on 'your own way'.

The work involved in planning a wedding day is shared. It is an unfair burden on the bride if the groom shows little interest in details, or vice versa. There is not only the 'right' to share in the preparation, but also the 'responsibility' to do so. It is one of the great ways to share decision-making in marriage. There is great variety in the selection of prayers, blessings, and Scripture readings that allows them to be 'custom fit' to both of you and your family situation. This is done in prayer and communication.

We ask your parents to read this booklet also, because parents often can provide helpful suggestions to you. They know you well and can usually be relied upon to offer advice and help.

Since we have other meetings and appointments, we ask you to call to arrange for needed appointments. If there are any special considerations (freedom to marry, previous marriages, etc.), please speak to us about the matter at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,  
Fr. Todd and the Pastoral Team  
Parish Telephone 931-1628





## What is Marriage?

Marriage is the unique and life-giving union between one man and one woman. We recall that marriage predates every current government, is older than the Church, and is found as the union of one man/one woman in virtually every culture (even polygamy and polyandry is understood as the marriage between one man and one woman, despite several simultaneous marriages).

Marriage is mutual covenant, permanent and lifelong, and has a dual and intrinsically-linked purpose of procreation and union of spouses. This is a natural fact, not theological. Though our culture sees marriage, procreation, and sexual expression as three separate realities, they are intrinsically connected. To put it succinctly, marriage is permanent, faithful, fruitful, total, and self-giving. It is a vocation – a way of life in which God’s will is lived out. Marriage is not about equality – it is about complementarity of the sexes, entering a partnership of life and love for the good of children and each other. Christ raises marriage to a sacrament – a way of receiving God’s grace. We recall that scripture begins with the creation of man and woman in the Garden of Eden who are given to each other in marriage, and that the theme of marriage winds its way through the Old Testament (marriage even used as an example of God and His people, both positively as in *Song of Songs* or negatively as in the harlot Gomer). The first miracle of Christ was at a wedding in Cana, the Book of Revelation ends with the Wedding feast of the Lamb and the Church made new in Christ!

True, some marriages fail and ‘end’ in divorce, but that does not invalidate the truth that marriage is lifelong. True, as well, that not all marriages of man and woman are capable of procreation, nor is every marital act mutually fertile, but the reality of their openness to life because of their complementarity of man and woman creates a different kind of fruitfulness.

True, too, some spouses are not faithful... We could go on speaking of failed marriage. All these things do not negate the reality of Marriage, but are a reflection of fallen human nature, or in Scriptural terms, because of hardness of heart (Mark 10:2-12).

Our faith teaches, and recent sociological studies confirm, that physical sexual expression is best experienced between husband and wife, when they mutual give themselves to the other holding nothing back, not even their fertility through contraception. As husband and wife come together in the conjugal embrace, they could repeat the words of Christ at the Last Supper, “This is my body, given to you.” They give themselves totally to the other, body and soul, including their fertility. As a result, every act of contraception is an evil, because it holds back fertility and one is not able to make a free and total gift of self. Every physical sexual expression outside of marriage is missing the mark of what its true intention is, and is a sin.

Our Faith teaches us that life begins at conception, and human life is given respect from the first moment of conception through natural death. The direct and intentional taking of a life, whether through abortion, euthanasia, or murder, is gravely evil. However the child came to exist, whatever ailments the child might have, whatever difficulties the mother (or even father) might have, the truth remains that a new human life exists and demands respect and rights of life. We cannot support any laws that teach otherwise! The same is true for every act that violates the already born human person and their God-given rights of life, liberty to act for good, and pursuit of happiness.

Resources for Marriage:

Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body

Catechism of the Catholic Church, ¶ 369-373, 1601-1666, 2201-2213, 2331-2336, 2360-2379

USCCB’s website <http://foryourmarriage.org> and <http://marriageuniqueforareason.com>

Minnesota for Marriage <http://minnesotaformarriage.com>

For more on the Church’s teaching on homosexuality/Same Sex Attraction, see Catechism ¶ 2357-2359



## **What are the rules and requirements for a valid Catholic wedding?**

While Catholic Priests and Deacons are given the ability to witness legal marriages, he would also only witness marriages that the Church would consider valid. There are three basic requirements for a valid Catholic wedding (presumed to be Sacramental except when one is not baptized):

The couple must be capable of being married—that is, they must be a woman and a man who are free of any impediment that would prevent marriage.

The couple must give their consent to be married — that is, by an act of their will they irrevocably give and accept one another in order to establish marriage (Canon 1057).

They must follow the canonical form for marriage—that is, they must be married according to the laws of the Church so that the Church and the wider community will be certain about the validity of their marriage.

Let's break down each of these points.

### **Impediments to marriage**

First, both people must be capable of being married and free of any impediment (obstacle) that would prevent marriage. Some impediments to marriage include:

Age: Both persons need to be old enough to contract marriage according to the local civil laws. (The State's Minimum age without parental consent is 18m and the Church's minimum age for males is 16 years, and females is 14 years - Canon 1083.)

Capable: Both must be able to perform the sexual act in the natural manner. (No sacramental marriage is possible if there is permanent impotence - Canon 1084.)

Free to marry: You cannot marry someone else if you are already married, or were married with a divorce with no investigation to determine that the previous marriage was not valid. (Canon 1085)

Baptized: Both need to be validly baptized, or have a proper dispensation for the marriage between a Catholic and non-Baptized (Canon 1086).

Previous vows or ordination: If one had taken public perpetual vows of chastity or ordination, no marriage can occur (Canons 1087-1088).

Fear or force: No one can be forced into marriage, either directly or because of some "grave fear", nor can the woman be abducted to be married (Canons 1089, 1103).

Murder: When the one who has previously been married murders his or her spouse in order to marry another person cannot validly enter into that marriage (Canon 1090).

Relatives: You cannot marry someone who is already your relative, or one that may be a relative due to both parties parents cohabitated (Canons 1091-1094).

Reason: Anyone who is incapable of understanding what marriage is and the responsibilities that come with it (because of mental impairment, for instance) cannot enter marriage (Canon 1095).

### **Freely given consent**

In order to enter a valid marriage, each person must freely choose to give his or her entire self to the other, and to accept the gift of the other, irrevocably and permanently until death. Church law presumes that the words and actions of the couple during the wedding accurately reflect their intention to do this. Immediately before the couple consents to enter into marriage (by reciting the marriage vows), the assisting priest or deacon asks the couple three questions:

If there are serious doubts about the ability of one or both persons to give their free consent to marriage "without reservation," the pastor may ask the couple to spend additional time addressing the issue; the wedding may even be delayed "for a time" until the issue is resolved (Canon 1077).

For example, cohabitation (living together) is an issue that usually receives extra attention during the marriage preparation process. A mature awareness of the nature of sacramental marriage

contributes to a couple's ability to freely consent to marriage. However, the sacrament of Marriage cannot be denied solely because a couple is living together. In fact, the Church has urged that pastors approach cohabiting couples with respect, charity, and patience.

The question about accepting children (which may be omitted for couples beyond the child-bearing years) may not seem to have anything to do with freely given consent. But the Church teaches that marriage is naturally ordered not only to "the good of the spouses," but also the "procreation and education of offspring" (Canon 1055). In other words, since having children is part of the natural purpose of marriage, it is impossible to give yourself to the other "without reservation" if children are excluded.

In order to ensure that couples fully understand what it means to give oneself in marriage, the Church requires a period of preparation before marriage.

### **The form of the marriage**

The Church has certain rules about how the marriage takes place (Canons 1108-1123). These rules are meant to ensure with certainty that a valid marriage actually took place. Basically, a valid marriage must be witnessed by an authorized representative of the Church (usually a priest or deacon) and two other witnesses. It also must follow the *Rite of Marriage*, the book containing the words and actions that make up the wedding liturgy. Under special circumstances, your pastor can ask your bishop to dispense with the requirement to celebrate the wedding according to the *Rite of Marriage* (a dispensation from form). This is most commonly the case when Catholics marry someone who is not Catholic and choose a wedding ceremony from the religious practice of the person who is not Catholic, thereby witnessed by the pastor/minister of that Church. In addition, the Diocese may have additional policies, such as the Diocese of New Ulm forbidding outdoor weddings or requiring pre-marriage preparations.

## **I. PRE-MARRIAGE PREPARATION**

### **A. REQUIREMENTS OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW ULM**

1. The couple is to give at least six month's notice of their intention to marry, to allow adequate time to prepare for marriage, but also the day of the wedding.
2. Every couple is to take a Pre-Marriage weekend. These are provided throughout the year at different centers. A booklet from the Diocese of New Ulm contains the dates and places of the weekends offered in the Dioceses of the state of Minnesota. Engaged Encounter is a preferred alternative. Please refer to dates and times on back page of this book.
3. Couples who are able are encouraged to attend *God's Plan for a Joy-filled Marriage* held several times a year at the Church of St. Mary, Sleepy Eye. Your Pastor will give you the information.
4. Every couple is to take the Pre-Marital Inventory (PMI). The one in use currently is FOCCUS – (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding, and Study) This is an affirmative exercise which gauges how couples relate to each other. The bulk of your marriage preparation meetings with the Pastor will entail discussing this.

### **B. SCHEDULING YOUR WEDDING**

Before confirming with the banquet hall and caterer, you must consult the Pastor. You cannot simply assume he will make whatever date you wish work – perhaps there is another wedding scheduled that day, or due to a liturgical day (such as Easter) no wedding would be allowed, or perhaps even he has a previous commitment.

Weddings on Saturday may be celebrated beginning no later than 2 hours before the Saturday evening Mass; during the scheduled evening Mass (5 pm April through September, 4 pm October through March); or after hour and a half after the evening Mass. Other times and days during the week are at the discretion and availability of the Pastor and facilities. When a wedding is part of a weekend liturgy, the readings of the day are read, except where they are inappropriate. A couple may substitute one of the first two readings if desired. The parish pays for the organist if the wedding is during the parish liturgy. However, should you wish to have extra soloists or special songs or music, these costs are picked up by you.

You also need to consider the timing of a rehearsal. Usually held the evening before, these need to be scheduled with the pastor as soon as possible. Rehearsal normally takes about one hour. Traditionally, rehearsals are followed by a supper, which should be also considered.

### **C. BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATES**

1. For Catholics: If you were not baptized at this parish, you must obtain a copy of your baptismal certificate that is less than 6 months old. Here is what you should do: write to the parish (or stop by) where you were baptized and ask for a copy of your baptismal certificate for marriage purposes. State your name, birth date, and parents' names. If you know approximate day of Baptism, this helps in finding the record. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the parish to return your certificate to you or to the priest arranging for your marriage. The address of St. Peter's is: 1801 West Broadway, PO Box 522, St. Peter MN 56082-0522.  
(After the marriage the priest will notify the parish where you were baptized that you have been married and that fact will be entered into your record at the church of Baptism. The marriage will also be recorded in the parish where the wedding takes

place.)

If you were baptized at this parish, you do not need to do anything outside of informing the priest of the fact. He will assure that the records are there.

2. For Non-Catholics Who Have Been Baptized: Proof of baptism is required. A copy of the original certificate will suffice. Usually other faiths issue a little booklet at the time of baptism which has all the facts recorded on one page of the booklet. If you do not have it in your possession, ask the pastor where you were baptized and follow the procedure above in Number 1.

#### **D. MARRIAGE LICENSE**

Civil governments grant most ministers (assuming they are registered) the ability to perform legally-recognized marriages. The government, though, requires that you obtain a marriage certificate. You must be married in the state where the license is issued. However, you do not have to be married in the county in Minnesota where the license is issued.

To apply for a marriage license:

- Both parties should apply in person at the County Clerk of Court Office. (for unique circumstances, when one cannot come, call ahead to the County offices to assure they would issue a license.)
- There is a license fee to be paid by check or cash at the time of application.
- There is a substantial discount given to you by the one preparing you for marriage, stating that you have had at least 12 hours of pre-marital preparation – do not apply for the license until you receive that form.
- There are no blood tests required in the State of Minnesota.
- There is a 5-day waiting period before the license is issued. (The day of application does not count toward the 5 days.)
- A marriage license is valid for 6 months. Consider applying at least 6 weeks before the wedding date.
- Please bring this to our secretary as soon as you get it so the appropriate information can be typed in. There is no need to wait until the last minute.
- You will be asked where you were born. (Proof not required.)
- Most counties require that you provide some identification for both parties, e.g., either a valid driver's license or a birth certificate.
- You will have to swear under oath that you do not have another spouse, and that the other information you have given is correct.
- If there has been a previous marriage - a copy of divorce papers are required proving the freedom to marry.
- The marriage license is signed by the officiating minister and the two witnesses. The bride and groom do not sign the license, and need not be present for the signing. The signed copy is sent to the Courthouse. The county will send you a certified copy after the marriage has been recorded.

#### **E. RECONCILIATION/SPIRITUAL PREPARATION**

We recommend that Catholic members of the wedding party prepare themselves spiritually for the wedding celebration. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a wonderful preparation. Do take some time to learn to pray together.

As your love and commitment is a moral witness to the world, we trust you will resist pressures to get you drunk or be part of sexualized practices at any pre-marriage parties.

## **F. PREVIOUS MARRIAGES**

For individuals marrying a second (or more time), there are additional items that must be addressed, sometimes even before setting a date for the wedding. No matter what, a copy of the marriage license for all previous marriages must be provided.

1. If the previous marriage ended in death, a death certificate for the deceased spouse must be provided.
2. If the marriage ended in divorce, and was investigated by a Diocesan Tribunal and found to be null (meaning no sacrament of marriage occurred) either through a formal case or a documentary case of lack of form (married without the Church's recognition), defect of form (meaning the witness of the original marriage lacked the ability to witness the marriage), or previous bond (meaning one of the persons was previously married with out a Declaration of Nullity), you are free to marry, but there may be stipulations (called rescripts) to a second marriage such as psychological counseling before a second marriage. In this case, in addition to the first marriage license, divorce decree, and declaration of nullity from the tribunal, any rescripts must be addressed and documentation is needed.
3. If there was a divorce but no tribunal, or no decision has been reached, there is need for this to be done first. No date can be set until a decision has been made.

The Diocese of New Ulm offers a special weekend for second marriage couples, which addresses the unique needs of couples such as blending families or not bringing bad past experiences into the marriage.

## **II. MARRIAGE CEREMONY**

There are numerous options in the planning of the marriage ceremony to make it more personal and reflect your understanding of marriage. Remember, however, that Marriage is a Sacrament, and that the wedding is a public liturgy of the Church, not a private thing that you can restructure freely. We are here to assist you in any way we can to make your wedding memorable, happy, and prayerful for both yourselves and those who gather with you.

### **A. MARRIAGE CEREMONY FORMS (TYPES)**

There are two ways of celebrating weddings in the Catholic Church:

1. Within a Mass,
2. A Scripture Service (Outside of Mass) (suggested for ecumenical marriages).

Ecumenical Marriages: A couple should read and discuss this section thoroughly before they make a decision about having or not having a Mass with their marriage ceremony. This is a very sensitive area and is a decision to be made by the couple and celebrant. Here are some things to consider: Mass is not required for the Sacrament of Marriage. For ecumenical marriages, having a Mass is not recommended with good reason. A wedding day celebrates a couple's unity. Being sensitive to the non-Catholic partner, family, and non-Catholic guests, especially if there has been any suggestion of disappointment, strained relationships, hurt, etc., because of the religious difference, is important. Religion and love are to draw people together, not tear them apart. Pressure over the issue of religion is a violation of the spiritual life of another person. When we love, we have to accept the other person as he/she is, right now. We cannot make demands and set conditions. For example, to insist that a future spouse join your church is a condition that invalidates the sacramental bond of marriage in the eyes of the



Catholic Church. No individual should be asked to, nor should they ever promise to, join another church before receiving instruction, praying about it, and being able to make the decision freely and in good conscience.

## **B. MUSIC**

A Christian wedding should be characterized by dignity, reverence, and joy. It is not only the solemn exchange of Sacramental vows by you, the engaged couple, but is also an act of worship in which you, the bride and groom, along with your family, friends, and the parish community, come together to offer thanks and praise and to ask God's blessing on your life together as husband and wife.

A wedding, then, is a communal celebration. It is the church's celebration of your marriage. You are not planning a private prayer, but a communal celebration of your love for each other. Your guests will not have been invited as mere spectators, but as worshippers with you. They should be drawn into full, active participation through prayer and song. **Scripture readings should be chosen before you select the music for the wedding.** Music has the power to unite a congregation more than any other element, so your selection of music and songs is very important. A particular musical piece should be chosen because of its ability to contribute to the joyful spirit and prayer of the total celebration. Music and song highlight what is happening at a liturgical moment. **During the wedding service, religious songs and music must be used. Favorite songs (eg, pop songs) of yours, which do not directly express these values, would be more appropriate at your reception or dance. Even prelude music should reflect the Christian nature and understanding of love, setting the tone and mood of the entire liturgy.**

**Some criteria for choosing Catholic wedding music:** You should ask, about every song used during the preludes and postludes but especially during the liturgy, whether the song is appropriate. The following questions might help you.

Is it prayerful?

Is it easy for the congregation to sing?

Is it beautiful?

Is it theologically accurate?

Is it appropriate at the time you wish to use it?

Should you have a soloist, that person should also be song leader. He or she should be aware that they are not just performing but assisting in the Liturgy. When there is a Mass, your soloist will lead the congregation in the Acclamation, the Alleluia, the Holy, Holy, the Memorial Acclamation, and the Great Amen. In addition, the congregation may very properly be asked to join in an opening or welcoming song, the Psalm response to the first reading, a communion song, and a closing song. We enclose copies of highly recommended music and songs at the end of this binder. **As soon as your wedding date is set, you should contact the Director of Music for the parish for assistance in selection and planning of music.**

The following is a list of pointers for wedding music that will be a help in planning your wedding.

1. Prelude: One or several musical selections just before the services can set the mood for the entire ceremony. They can be either vocal or instrumental. There should be a period of at least five minutes of silence just before the ceremony begins, however.
2. Entrance: Since the entrance of the bridal party should be seen and enjoyed,

instrumental music is more effective here. A song may be sung by the entire congregation when the bridal party reaches the altar, to gather in voice and prayer to give praise God with the bride and groom. We suggest that the congregation be seated for the procession, but rise for the entrance of the Bride and the gathering song.

3. \* Gloria: The Third Edition of the Roman Missal requests the Gloria be sung (or at least recited) before the opening prayer. The Director of Music or musicians should know this liturgical text and a few settings (that thematically match the Eucharistic Acclamations).
  4. Responsorial Psalm: The congregation should participate in singing the Psalm refrain after the first reading with a cantor singing the verses. Note that this must be an approved psalm, not just an additional song.
  5. Rite of Marriage: For a wedding within Mass, after the vows are completed, a brief meditation may be sung as the wedding party and the newly-married couple return to their seats for the petitions. Note, it is preferred not to have a Unity candle during the liturgy, but reserved for the banquet. See the note on this at the end of this section.
  6. \* Presentation of Gifts: If a vocal solo was used after the Rite of Marriage, instrumental music is a better choice here, since the presentation of gifts follows so soon after the Rite of Marriage.
  7. \* Eucharistic Acclamation: The Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, and the Great Amen must be sung by all the people. These sung prayers belong to the congregation and must never be done by a choir or soloist alone.
  8. The Lord's Prayer: The Lord's Prayer is best recited, as the congregation is to participate. The choir or soloist must never sing it alone, again because it is the congregation's prayer.
  9. \* Sign of Peace: Instrumental background may accompany the greeting of peace, but is not necessary. A song is not allowed.
  10. \* Communion: Any Communion song is appropriate here, particularly those which speak of Christian love and community. A song with a short, simple refrain will encourage congregational participation as they approach the Altar.
  11. \* Meditation: If the people did not sing during Communion, this would be an appropriate time to sing. Otherwise, a solo might be used here if care is taken that the text is suitable for this moment of the Mass.
  12. Recessional: A song of thanksgiving and/or blessing sung by the congregation may be used here. Instrumental music is most effective.
- \* When marriage is celebrated within a Mass.

### **C. SCRIPTURE READINGS**

If the wedding is within a normally scheduled weekend Mass, you would use the readings of the day (which can be found <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/> on the appropriate date, noting that Saturday's Masses are listed on the following Sundays). For weddings held outside of the normal weekend Masses, numerous options for Scripture readings are in this wedding binder. You will want to study these readings together to make your choices. You should select readings that are meaningful both to you and those who are gathered to celebrate your marriage. You will need to choose at least one reading from the Old Testament or New Testament (most chose on each), as well as a Gospel passage.

### **D. THE VOWS**

If you are being married in the Catholic Church, you can choose from the two ‘forms’ found in the wedding folder. Composing your own vows is not allowed, as it is an integral part of the sacrament, and thus regulated by the Universal Church. Also, since this is the essential part of the wedding ceremony, and must be lived out the rest of your lives, please memorize your vows. The celebrant will assist you with the recitation of the vows, so you can ask to repeat them. You might consider stating your vows in your own words at the wedding banquet if you wish, especially appropriate if you would choose to have it as a part of an Unity Candle Service.

### **III. LITURGICAL MINISTERS**

The size of your wedding party is your personal choice, but you are reminded that you are asking your relative/friends to spend a lot of money and you are increasing the cost of your wedding to yourselves because of extra gifts, flowers, rehearsal dinner, etc. The parish needs to know an approximate number to properly prepare for unconsecrated hosts for during Mass or worship aids.

#### **A. WITNESSES**

State and Church law require two witnesses for every wedding. They must be at least 16 years of age. Normally, these are the Best Man and Maid/Matron of Honor, but not necessarily. Their names are registered on a number of documents including the license and the official registration of the wedding in the parish’s sacramental records. You must provide the priest/minister with legal first and last names. Both must be at the rehearsal.

#### **B. GROOMSMEN AND BRIDESMAIDS**

They are not necessary to the ceremony and are there basically to form a guard of honor. All should be at the rehearsal.

#### **C. FLOWER GIRLS AND RING BEARERS**

These are not necessary but if you wish to have a flower girl and/or ring bearer, you should choose children at least five years of age, and mature enough to walk down the aisle without prompting or attracting undue attention to themselves. Very young children have posed numerous problems at rehearsals, for photographers, and, most importantly, during the procession and ceremony. They should be at the rehearsal with at least one parent.

#### **D. USHERS/MINISTERS OF HOSPITALITY**

They welcome guests, pass out wedding programs, and take guests to seats. They are generally required for larger weddings. Traditionally men have been chosen for this role, but do consider the use of women or couples. You or your parents may welcome guests. You are responsible for explaining any special seating arrangements that you desire. If your wedding is at a parish Mass, the parish ushers will seat the parishioners and take up the collection. Wedding ushers seat the wedding guests as near to the front and center of the church as possible.

After the ceremony, the ministers of hospitality tidy up the church, bridal room, pick up programs left in the pews, straighten out the hymnals, help put the sanctuary back in order, pick up discarded film boxes, used flashes, flower boxes, etc. They should be at the rehearsal. Parents may welcome guests at door and look after gifts.

## **E. ALTAR SERVERS**

One or two altar servers are required for a wedding within a Mass. A list is provided in the back of this binder.

## **F. LECTORS**

You may ask a worshipping Christian who is a good public speaker/reader to proclaim the Scriptures. Perhaps one or more persons of the wedding party could do so. The person(s) you ask should make an appointment to rehearse the readings prior to the wedding rehearsal night. In case of an ecumenical marriage, you may wish to get the guest minister to proclaim Scripture.

## **G. MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION**

If you have a wedding Mass, we need four (4) commissioned Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to assist in the distribution of Eucharist (a concelebrating priest or assisting deacon are ordinary ministers, and would be asked to assist first). Check your guest list to see if you have invited one or other of our Eucharistic Ministers. A current list is in your wedding folder. You may have authorized Eucharistic Ministers from other parishes participating – please confirm that they are properly commissioned.

## **H. MUSICIANS AND SONG LEADERS**

Musicians and song leaders are an important part of your ceremony. They assist the assembly in sung prayer and add a festive dimension to your wedding. They should be competent musicians who are familiar with the Catholic liturgy and who are willing to lead the assembly's song. With this in mind, we offer the following guidelines in selection of musicians:

### **1. Organist/pianist/other musicians**

These people should be trained and experienced (someone who plays piano does not necessarily qualify as an organist). **The parish organist gets first preference to play for a wedding.** Organists other than the parish organist must meet with the parish organist to ensure correct usage of the instrument.

### **Song leader**

This person should be experienced singer, and comfortable in front of people (not just someone who enjoys singing), and aware of the unique duty to assist the congregation to sing.

### **Soloist**

This person should be an experienced singer/soloist. He/she may also be your song leader. Included is a list of recommended song leaders, soloists, and organists.

### **2. Fees**

Musicians set their own fees. Beside the actual ceremony, fees include consultation time, practice time for soloists and organist, travel expenses and music expenses.

### **3. Music**

Do not purchase music without consulting with our parish musicians. Usually they have selections needed; and if not, have a better understanding of selecting an arrangement that is suitable for the instrument to be used.

### **4. Wedding Rehearsal**

Organists and song leaders do not have to come to the wedding rehearsal.

## **IV. OTHER ITEMS**

### **A. PROCESSIONAL**

All those in the wedding party process in from the main entrance of the Church. In designing our process, we strive to symbolize the equality of men and women and the unity of two families through marriage. You have four options (note the celebrant and, if during Mass, the servers, lead the procession):

1. Couple process together after the wedding party.
2. Bride and groom process with both parents. Following the celebrant, the groom and parents leading the rest of the wedding party, with the bride and parents ending the procession.
3. Groom processes with mothers, and groom's father behind, with Bride and father ending the procession.
4. Bride escorted by an honored person, especially in the case of father's death or parental divorce with a strained relationship.

### **B. SEATING ARRANGEMENTS**

Facing the altar, the left side is traditionally the 'bride's side' and the right side is the 'groom's side' for the wedding party and immediate family.

Usually the groomsmen and bridesmaids are seated in the chairs provided and the parents and grandparents in the first row of pews. Our church holds almost 1,000 people, so we encourage you to direct the ministers of hospitality to seat the people toward the front and center of the church.

Bride and Groom are seated on the Altar platform opposite the Ambo.

### **C. AISLE RUNNER**

We do not allow aisle runners. This is primarily because of the static electricity caused by our synthetic carpet, but also due to the slope of the floor and the possibility of tripping or slipping.

### **D. BRIDAL VEILS**

The old custom of the bride wearing part of her veil over her face as she walks down the aisle comes from arranged marriages and is dying out. However, should the bride decide on it, the celebrant should be informed before the rehearsal.

### **F. BRIDAL AND GROOMS ROOMS**

The bride's room is in the Family Room beside the priest's Sacristy. It has a mirror and a separate bathroom. The groom's room is in Dustin's Corner in the corridor opposite the Social Hall. There are bathrooms around the corner to the west. All rooms should be cleaned up and vacated shortly before the wedding.

### **G. FOOD AND DRINK**

Please confine these to the bride's and groom's rooms and do not eat or drink in Church, Chapel, or Narthex.

### **H. FLOWERS**

Flowers and greenery arrangements should reflect the liturgical season. Please consult with the Pastor before ordering flowers for the church. For location and suggestions, see Environment in the Church (found behind the clear tab).

## **I. PHOTOGRAPHERS AND PICTURES**

Reverence and respect for the sanctuary should be maintained throughout the photographing. Photographing should be completed in the sanctuary area a half hour before the wedding ceremony. Your guests will begin to arrive around that time. Photographers are welcome to take pictures during the ceremony providing they stay in one place and do not use flash or strobe lights. Please give the photographer the enclosed Guidelines for Photographers (found behind the clear tab).

Videotaping – Please discuss the location to video tape the ceremony with the celebrant before the wedding. The area behind the font seems to work best.

## **J. RECEPTION**

The Social Hall is available for receptions. It seats 300 and may be divided in two. Wine and beer may be served at tables. If you are planning on serving alcohol, you must inform the parish staff at the time of reserving the Hall. You will need to provide proof of insurance (a rider) or purchase a “Special Events” insurance plan through the Church’s insurance carrier for an additional fee. For details of reserving the Social Hall, please consult with the parish secretary.

## **K. RICE, CONFETTI, BUBBLES, ETC**

This is not permitted due to clean-up difficulties and safety issues.

## **L. WEDDING BOOKLET/PROGRAM**

To insure congregational participation in prayer and song, a wedding program or booklet should be given to your guest. We have copyright permission to include music in this program on a one-time use basis. Such a booklet is also an excellent souvenir for all who attend your wedding. You may have them printed through our parish secretary. The minimum is 100 programs at \$35.00 set up fee plus \$.20 per copy (including inserts). This cost covers paper, printing and secretarial staff. This should be done at least two weeks prior to the wedding.

## **V. GUEST MINISTERS/PRIESTS**

In the case of an ecumenical marriage, the other pastor may be invited to participate in the service. Some ministers are opposed to this, some prefer to come and be a guest in the congregation, some are unable to do it because of schedule conflicts. Their participation is welcomed and they are invited. You may also wish them to lead the meal prayer. If the pastor plans to participate in the service, the priest should be informed of this and be given his/her name and phone number well before the wedding so that contact can be made. It is up to the couple to check everything out with him/her to see whether or not he/she can or wants to participate. Do not presume that he/she will/or can. Choosing to do this should depend on the relationship that the person has with the pastor. In such cases, it is extremely inappropriate to have a wedding with Mass or communion. If the non-Catholic party seldom goes to church services or does not know the pastor, it may be inappropriate to ask the minister to be part of the service. A guest pastor may read one of the readings, but not the Gospel or preach, or may offer the petitions, prayer, or other element

Another Catholic priest (either a family friend, a pastor from another parish, or former pastor) may be invited to assist in the wedding as well. Another priest may preach the

homily, or the Pastor may even ‘delegate’ him to perform the ceremony. Please inform the Pastor of this possibility, again not assuming the other priest’s availability. A deacon may also be asked to assist at your wedding, or even preside at a wedding outside of Mass. He may not receive your vows if held during Mass, however. Within Mass, he may read the Gospel, lead the intercessions, and may even preach.

## **VI. PRIESTS AT YOUR WEDDING IN A NON-CATHOLIC CHURCH**

In the case of an ecumenical marriage, if you chose to, you may request permission to be married in a non-Catholic Church (called a “Dispensation from Form”). You will still need to complete the requirements already listed, and through the Pastor, ask for permission from the Bishop of the Diocese of New Ulm. If you have not met and signed several documents with the priest, you can be assured that that various requirements of the Catholic Church has not been completed. If a Dispensation from Form is sought, the priest would not be present at the ceremony, but please inform the guests that your marriage is recognized by the Church if they ask.

## **VII. INVITATIONS TO THE PRIEST**

The priest is committed to being at your rehearsal and marriage ceremony. However, he does not presume to be invited to your reception, or even the rehearsal supper, unless you invite him. Sometimes the parish schedule does not allow him to attend either a rehearsal dinner or the wedding reception.

## **VIII. MARRIAGE OFFERING**

The sacramental offering to the parish for your wedding, such as the time of the priest/celebrant, pre-marital preparation, use of the church, organ, lights, heat, extra cleaning, etc. is \$350.00. All offerings should be made to the parish secretary prior to the wedding day. No other fees for the priest are required. If you wish to give him a gift, you are free to do so.

## **IX. PARISH REGISTRATION**

Should you be living in our parish after marriage, please give our parish secretary your new married name and address as soon as it becomes available, even prior to your wedding.

## **X. SIMPLICITY**

We ask all engaged couples to scale back from all the planning, spending, and activity that surrounds weddings in our society today. We ask you to reflect together on the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Lk. 16:19-31. At times, a simple ceremony is more elegant than expensive or overly planned or detailed ones.

You, the engaged couple, and your families rightly want your wedding day to be a joyful day. At times, though, spending a lot of money is wrongly equated with happiness. We ask you to keep in mind our Christian responsibility to use our resources prudently and to remember our duty to share our gifts with our neighbors, especially the poor and disadvantaged. We would ask you to consider whether you really need all the traditional trappings of a wedding. In addition, we would suggest that you make a donation to the disadvantaged a part of your wedding ceremony. To start off your wedding by willingly sharing your gifts with the poor will surely bless your life together.

## **XI COHABITATION/SEXUAL ACTIVITY BEFORE MARRIAGE**

With increasing frequency, it seems that young couples are living together prior to marriage and at some point decide that they want to get married and have a big church wedding. The difficulty is that Church and her pastors can assume that you are sexually active if you are living together. This does cause a problem for the priest who is asked to witness the marriage. The danger of such a practice is that you are ‘simulating a sacrament’ you are enjoying one of its goods without being in the sacrament itself. Though the popular teaching is that this is not harmful, studies have shown that it undermines marriage, and shows this conventional wisdom to be utter myth. Those that cohabit are 46% more likely to be divorced within ten years. Add in artificial contraception, and your odds are greater.

I am glad that you are asking for the Sacrament at this point, and will be happy to help you in the process. However, you are putting all of us at a disadvantage.

The Church does not approve of cohabitation and pre-marital sex for good reason.

Because of the tremendous gift of sexuality, it is only to be expressed within the appropriate context of Marriage. By asking me to witness your marriage while being sexually active before marriage, you are putting me in an awkward situation that forces me to ignore this great gift’s misuse. You are asking me to legitimize a situation that is against Church teaching and practice, in addition to putting your relationship off to a difficult start. I would be asked to ignore your ignoring potentially harmful circumstances that may jeopardize your freedom to truly enter marriage vows. I want you to start your married life on the strongest foot possible.

I am requesting that you not have any further sexual activity until after your wedding. If you are cohabitating, please consider other arrangements so that you can more easily resist the temptations. I invite you to come to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and ask not only for forgiveness for the past sins, but also for the grace to be chaste. Even within the great sacrament of Marriage, after all, every one is invited to be chaste – using the gift of one’s sexuality in a manner appropriate to one’s state in life.

Again, your marriage will be better for this. Thank you.

## **XII NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING**

As you begin your married life, you may find people asking you about your family planning method. What they usually mean, of course, is how are you going to limit the number of children. I wish to remind you of the Church teaching against all forms of artificial contraception, which can be divided into four types:

- Barrier methods (eg. Condoms and diaphragms): Made of mostly latex, these can cause allergic reactions in some. These have a tendency to break and leak.
- Chemical/hormonal: These include the Pill, spermicides and RU486. These work by creating a hostile environment in which ovulation and fertilization / conception are difficult. There is a back up hormone in the Pill that then prevents implantation of the newly conceived child. This results in a spontaneous abortion. There are studies suggesting links to cancer and birth defects.
- Surgery: Either a hysterectomy, tubal ligations, or vasectomy aims at preventing the production and release of eggs and sperm. This treats fertility as a sickness instead of a standard for health.
- IUDs: these are placed in the womb of the woman and prevent implantation, not ovulation and fertilization / conception, resulting in spontaneous abortions.

The gift of sexuality is a gift that is best given as a whole, with fertility and desire for



deeper union as a major component. The use of any artificial contraception limits the expression of the gift of fertility. It holds it back at best, or negates it completely. How can you make a whole gift of yourself and hold something so important and God-given back.

Natural Family planning methods such as the Billings (Ovulation) method ([www.familyplanning.net](http://www.familyplanning.net)), the Creighton Method ([www.creightonmodel.com](http://www.creightonmodel.com)), and the Sympto-thermal Method ([www.ccli.org](http://www.ccli.org)), take advantage of God-given traits in knowing the fertility of the woman (who is only fertile about 100 hours per month, versus a man who is fertile, if healthy, all the time). By abstaining from sexual activity during the fertile period, a couple 'limits' their chances of getting pregnant. Note that there is no command that you must always be sexually active. NFP must still be used for just reasons, and the couple needs to have an openness to life all the same, which by its nature NFP allows. In fact, many couples use NFP to know when the best time to conceive a child is! These methods are as effective (if not more) than artificial means, and are harmless. They are cheap and private (versus buying the artificial means). By State Law, your health insurance covers the cost of the classes if it covers artificial forms of contraception. Statistics further show that couples who practice NFP are happier and are better communicators. Visit, [www.omsoul.com](http://www.omsoul.com) or ask Father for local training couples or more information.

Note that couples need to be chaste for a full cycle during the training. Because of this, it is often most practical to take the classed before the wedding.

# The Unity Candle

**Rationale:** There is much discussion about the usability of the Unity Candle during a Catholic Wedding Liturgy. It falls into two camps – one side saying that because it is not explicitly forbidden, it is allowed; the other saying that because it is not explicitly allowed, it should be avoided. Some suggest the use of a Unity Candle began in non-liturgical weddings, and perhaps even traces its beginnings to pagan traditions. Some have cynically remarked that it is a custom sponsored by candle companies. No matter, it does not enjoy the status of a tradition of the Catholic Church such as the exchange of vows and rings, for the following reasons:

- Roman Catholic liturgy is public and universal (as opposed to privately and locally governed), and adaptations are only rarely allowed. It is not expressly allowed in the current rite and unknown if it will be allowed, or even banned, in any future revision. Some priests and liturgists may allow or even require the Unity Candle during the liturgy, but it does not raise it to the rights of tradition.
- Further, there is no clearly or universally defined significance or symbolism of the Unity Candle. Some suggest that it means the merging or even the extinguishing of souls/persons/individuals into one new entity or married reality, neither of which are Catholic thoughts, or that it is a symbol of the husband and wife now joined to form one body/family. This unity, however is best symbolized in the exchange of vows and rings and the nuptial blessing that are necessary and integral elements of every Catholic wedding, and by the reception of Eucharist during a the Nuptial Mass. As such, the unity candle is a duplication of these other profoundly-Catholic elements.
- Finally, while it might hold some meaning for the couple, it has no liturgical function. Those who are preparing for marriage in the Church should be willing to accept the Catholic Teaching and Liturgy as it currently exists with its expressed allowable adaptations (e.g. the wide variety of suggested prayer texts and Scripture passages, as well as music and hymnody). In fact, the Unity Candle interrupts (some more stringent liturgists would say "violates" or "does damage to") the natural flow of the Wedding Liturgy that moves from the Consent and Vows to the Exchange of Rings to Prayers of the Faithful to the Eucharist and Nuptial Blessing. It is simply lit and left.

Though it may allow for a photo-op and additional song, this is not an appropriate reason to continue its use in liturgy when other opportunities exist elsewhere. For the above reasons, I highly discouraged the Unity Candle's use during the Wedding Liturgy.

This does not mean, however, that there is an outright ban the use of the Unity Candle as a part of the 'overall' wedding celebration. For example, a very beautiful and much more appropriate location for the ceremony is at the Banquet immediately before the meal, where it becomes a visual and memorable centerpiece. Properly and thoughtfully prepared, it is often done with great success. In fact, many compliment the couple on how moving it was to start their banquet with the lighting of the Unity Candle. It ties the Wedding Liturgy into the banquet, provides a natural forum for prayer where it might otherwise be lost, and is not simply lit and immediately ignored. What follows is a suggested guideline for how this can be done.

## **Details in preparation (beside the text):**

- \*Location of the Candles – in front of the Married couple (as a centerpiece) is best.
- \*How are the side candles to be lit? By the parents? Before the reception begins with other candles, etc.?  
The most 'elegant' way of lighting the candles if by parents and during the ceremony is to have a tea candle lit before everyone is seated and using a wick or long match.
- \*Who is going to lead or are you going to have several people involved?
- \*Is there a Microphone available, especially if the hall is spacious or many are in attendance?

## **A recommended Candle lighting service (Adapt as needed/desired)**

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Greeting:** Today we witnessed the bond of (our friends/children) N. & N. in Holy Matrimony. As we begin this wedding banquet in their honor, we now take time to pray, to ask God's continued blessings upon them, as they light the unity candle.

### **Lighting of the individual candles:**

*If the parent's wish, they could say a few words about their newly married child or about marriage/family in general, as the candle is lit. For example:*

When N. was baptized, we received a candle to be kept burning brightly as a symbol of the faith that he/she was baptized into. As his/her faith has brought him to the sacrament of Matrimony, we light another candle as a sign of love.

### **Words of the Couple**

*If the couple wishes, they can basically 'recite' the vows in their own words.*

### **Prayer for the Lighting of the Unity Candle**

*Couple:* Lord God, today we began our life together as husband and wife. We give you thanks for the example of our parents (and grandparents). We praise you for the love of our families. As we vow ourselves to each other, we promise to be true to each other in good times and bad, in sickness and health. We ask you to let these words be engraved on our hearts and in our minds. May we say them and pray them often, so that they become a part of us and that we can live by them. As we build our family together, bless us with the warmth of your love and help us to cooperate in your life of grace. As we light this candle, we ask you to keep the flame of faith and love alive in us. We ask this in Jesus' name.

*By another:* Lord God, today we witnessed N. and N. begin their life together as husband and wife. We give you thanks for the example of their parents (and grandparents). We praise you for the love of their families. As they vowed themselves to each other, they promised to be true to each other in good times and bad, in sickness and health. We ask you to let these words be engraved on their hearts and in their minds. May they say them and pray them often, so that they become a part of who they are so that they can live by them. As they build a family together, bless them with the warmth of your love and help them to cooperate in your life of grace. As we light this candle, we ask you to keep the flame of faith and love alive in them. We ask this in Jesus' name.

### **Light the candle (do not extinguish)**

**Meal Prayer:** Bless us, O Lord, and these, thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## Wedding Celebration Planning Sheet

### Within Mass

This Wedding Celebration Sheet is to be prepared carefully with you and your spouse-to-be. It will be used by the celebrant of your wedding, the musicians, and whoever prepares the wedding program to be given to the congregation. This form is for the wedding celebration that is held within a Mass, and the following form is for the wedding without Mass. Note item in italics is for information purposes, and will not be in the program.

### The Wedding of

**Bride's Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
**And**

**Groom's name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date and time of the wedding** \_\_\_\_\_

**Church of St. Peter**  
**St. Peter, Minnesota**

*(Date and time of the Practice: \_\_\_\_\_)*

*Approximate number of guests (for hosts and programs): \_\_\_\_\_*

Names of

Bride's parents/step parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Grooms Parents/step parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Maid/Matron of honor and Best Man:

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

Servers: \_\_\_\_\_

Organist/pianist/instrumentalists/singers \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parish Sacristan: \_\_\_\_\_

Ushers: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Total number of couples in the Wedding party (not including Bride and Groom) \_\_\_\_\_*

Order in which Wedding Party will enter (note that Maid/Matron of Honor and Best Man are typically last, before the Bride)

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

Flower Girl and Ring Bearer (Note that both are optional)

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

## The ceremony

Prelude: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Music for seating of Grandparents? \_\_\_\_\_

Processional music: \_\_\_\_\_

*Who is in the Procession:*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Servers and Celebrant, Groom with mothers & his father, wedding party, and Bride with father*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Servers and Celebrant, Wedding party, groom with his parents, and Bride with her parents*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Servers and Celebrant, Groom with his parents, Wedding party, Bride accompanied by parents*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Other: (must be discussed with pastor)* \_\_\_\_\_

Gathering Hymn: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign of the Cross

Gloria (Setting): \_\_\_\_\_

Opening prayer:

*(Full set with Opening prayer, Prayer over the Gifts, Preface, Nuptial Blessing, Prayer after communion, and Final Blessing)*

Roman Missal Option A, Option B, Option C

Old Testament Reading: Read by: \_\_\_\_\_

OT 1 Genesis 1:26-28, 31a - Creation of man and woman

OT 2 Genesis 2 18-24 – Creation of woman

OT 3 Genesis 24: 48-51, 58-67 – Meeting of Isaac and Rebekah

OT 4 Tobit 7: 9c-10, 11c-17– The marriage of Tobias and Sarah

OT 5 Tobit 8: 4-9 – Prayer of new spouses

OT 6 Proverbs 31:10-13,19-20,30-31 The value of a wife

OT 7 Song of Songs 2 :8-10, 14, 16a; 8: 6-7 – Love as strong as death

OT 8 Sirach 26: 1-4; 16-21 - A good wife

OT 9 Jeremiah 31: 31-31a, 33-34a – Covenant of the People of God

Responsorial Psalm (See music director for resources)

Sung by: \_\_\_\_\_

New Testament reading: Read by: \_\_\_\_\_

NT 1 Romans 8: 31B- 35, 37-39 – The love of Christ

NT 2 Romans 12: 1-2, 9-18 – The Christian life

NT 3 Romans 15: 1b-3a, 5-7, 13 – Harmony with one another

NT 4 1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20 – The temple of the Holy Spirit

NT 5 1 Corinthians 12:31-13a – The greatest is love

NT 6 Ephesians 5: 2a, 21-33 - The mystery of marriage

NT 7 Philippians 4:4-9 - Think about what is good

NT 8 Colossians 3:12-17 – Love and thanksgiving

NT 9 Hebrews 13:1-4a, 5-6b - let marriage be honored

NT 10 1 Peter 3: 1-9 – Family life

NT 11 1 John 3: 18-24 – Active love

NT 12 1 John 4: 7-12 – God is love

NT 13 Revelation 19: 1, 5-9a – The marriage of the Lamb

Gospel acclamation and verse Setting: \_\_\_\_\_

Gospel:

- G 1 Matthew 5: 1-12a – The Beatitudes
- G 2 Matthew 5: 13-16 – Salt and light
- G 3 Matthew 7: 21, 24-29 – The house built upon rock
- G 4 Matthew 19: 3-6 – What God has joined, man must not divide
- G 5 Matthew 22: 35-40 – Love as the greatest commandment
- G 6 Mark 10: 6-9 – The two become one
- G 7 John 2: 1-11 – Marriage at Cana
- G 8 John 15: 9-12 – Remain in love
- G 9 John 15: 12-16 – Love one another
- G 10 John 17: 20-26 – That they may be one

Statement of Intent

Vows: Vows 1 or Vows 2

- \_\_\_\_\_ *Couple repeat after the celebrant*
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Couple repeat from memory*
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Couple reads from book/index cards*
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Consent through questions*

Blessing and exchange of rings:

*Option 1, 2, or 3*

(Creed if during Solemnity or Sunday Mass)

Prayers of the faithful:

Setting # \_\_\_\_\_ or prepared by the Couple: \_\_\_\_\_

Read by: \_\_\_\_\_

Preparation of the Altar and Presentation of the Gifts Music

- 
- \_\_\_\_\_ Brought up by couple
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Best man/Maid of honor
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Parents of the couple
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Others \_\_\_\_\_

Prayer over the gifts

Preface

Holy, Holy, (Mass setting: \_\_\_\_\_)

Eucharistic prayer I or III

Eucharistic acclamation,

Great Amen,

Lamb of God (These should be sung if there is other singing...)

Our Father: Sung/chanted or recited

Nuptial blessing

Sign of Peace: No song allowed at this time.

*Eucharist under both forms for \_\_\_\_\_ Couple \_\_\_\_\_ Wedding Party \_\_\_\_\_ Everyone*

Eucharistic Ministers (they must be commissioned, see the parish list) Discuss number with the Pastor

---

---

Song during Communion: \_\_\_\_\_

Post-Communion Reflection song (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Prayer after Communion

Final Blessing

Recessional Music: \_\_\_\_\_

Postlude: \_\_\_\_\_

*Guests will be dismissed by pews Yes or No*

*By the Newly Married Couple*

*By the Ushers*

**Final Details:**

Signing of the marriage license at/place (typically in the sacristy immediately after the liturgy)

\_\_\_\_\_

Does the Photographer want a photo of the signing of the License? \_\_\_\_\_

Concelebrants/Assisting Deacons? \_\_\_\_\_

Questions/comments/special instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Couple's Special Message for the Program: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Wedding Celebration Planning Sheet

### Without Mass

This Wedding Celebration Sheet is to be prepared carefully with you and your spouse-to-be. It will be used by the celebrant of your wedding, the musicians, and whoever prepares the wedding program to be given to the congregation. This form is for the wedding celebration that is held without a Mass, and the previous form is for the wedding with Mass. Note item in italics is for information purposes, and will not be in the program.

### The Wedding of

Bride's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
And \_\_\_\_\_

Groom's name \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time of the wedding \_\_\_\_\_

Church of St. Peter  
St. Peter, Minnesota

(Date and time of the Practice: \_\_\_\_\_)

Approximate number of guests (for hosts and programs): \_\_\_\_\_

Names of

Bride's parents/step parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Grooms Parents/step parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Maid/Matron of honor and Best Man:

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

Organist/pianist/instrumentalists/singers \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parish Sacristan: \_\_\_\_\_

Ushers: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Total number of couples in the Wedding party (not including Bride and Groom) \_\_\_\_\_

Order in which Wedding Party will enter (note that Maid/Matron of Honor and Best Man are typically last, before the Bride)

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

Flower Girl and Ring Bearer (Note that both are optional)

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_



## The ceremony

Prelude: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Music for seating of Grandparents? \_\_\_\_\_

Processional music: \_\_\_\_\_

*Who is in the Procession:*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Celebrant, Groom with mothers & his father, wedding party, and Bride with father*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Celebrant, Wedding party, groom with his parents, and Bride with her parents*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Celebrant, Groom with his parents, Wedding party, Bride accompanied by parents*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Other: (must be discussed with pastor)* \_\_\_\_\_

Gathering Hymn: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign of the Cross

Opening prayer:

Roman Missal Option A, Option B, Option C

Old Testament Reading: Read by: \_\_\_\_\_

OT 1 Genesis 1:26-28, 31a - Creation of man and woman

OT 2 Genesis 2 18-24 – Creation of woman

OT 3 Genesis 24: 48-51, 58-67 – Meeting of Isaac and Rebekah

OT 4 Tobit 7: 9c-10, 11c-17– The marriage of Tobias and Sarah

OT 5 Tobit 8: 4-9 – Prayer of new spouses

OT 6 Proverbs 31:10-13,19-20,30-31 The value of a wife

OT 7 Song of Songs 2 :8-10, 14, 16a; 8: 6-7 – Love as strong as death

OT 8 Sirach 26: 1-4; 16-21 - A good wife

OT 9 Jeremiah 31: 31-31a, 33-34a – Covenant of the People of God

Responsorial Psalm (See music director for resources)

Sung by: \_\_\_\_\_

New Testament reading: Read by: \_\_\_\_\_

NT 1 Romans 8: 31B- 35, 37-39 – The love of Christ

NT 2 Romans 12: 1-2, 9-18 – The Christian life

NT 3 Romans 15:1b-3a,5-7,13 –Harmony with one another

NT 4 1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20 – The temple of the Holy Spirit

NT 5 1 Corinthians 12:31-138a – The greatest is love

NT 6 Ephesians 5: 2a, 21-33 - The mystery of marriage

NT 7 Philippians 4:4-9 - Think about what is good

NT 8 Colossians 3:12-17 – Love and thanksgiving

NT 9 Hebrews 13:1-4a,5-6b - let marriage be honored

NT 10 1 Peter 3: 1-9 – Family life

NT 11 1 John 3: 18-24 – Active love

NT 12 1 John 4: 7-12 – God is love

NT 13 Revelation 19: 1, 5-9a – The marriage of the Lamb

Gospel acclamation and verse Setting: \_\_\_\_\_

Gospel:

- G 1 Matthew 5: 1-12a – The Beatitudes
- G 2 Matthew 5: 13-16 – Salt and light
- G 3 Matthew 7: 21, 24-29 – The house built upon rock
- G 4 Matthew 19: 3-6 – What God has joined, man must not divide
- G 5 Matthew 22: 35-40 – Love as the greatest commandment
- G 6 Mark 10: 6-9 – The two become one
- G 7 John 2: 1-11 – Marriage at Cana
- G 8 John 15: 9-12 – Remain in love
- G 9 John 15: 12-16 – Love one another
- G 10 John 17: 20-26 – That they may be one

Statement of Intent

Vows: Vows 1 or Vows 2

- \_\_\_\_\_ *Couple repeat after the celebrant*
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Couple repeat from memory*
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Couple reads from book/index cards*
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Consent through questions*

Blessing and exchange of rings:

*Option 1, 2, or 3*

Prayers of the faithful:

Setting # \_\_\_\_\_ or prepared by the Couple: \_\_\_\_\_

Read by: \_\_\_\_\_

Nuptial blessing Option A, B, or C

Our Father: Sung/chanted or recited

Final Blessing

Recessional Music: \_\_\_\_\_

Postlude: \_\_\_\_\_

*Guests will be dismissed by pews Yes or No*

*By the Newly Married Couple*

*By the Ushers*

**Final Details:**

Signing of the marriage license at/place (typically in the sacristy immediately after the liturgy)

---

Does the Photographer want a photo of the signing of the License? \_\_\_\_\_

Concelebrants/Assisting Deacons? \_\_\_\_\_

Questions/comments/special instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

Couple's Special Message for the Program: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Prayers From the Roman Missal (For During Mass)

## For the Celebration of Marriage

Please choose as a set from Option A, B , or C.

### Option A (RM 1177-1183)

Entrance antiphon cf. Ps 20 (19): 3, 5

May the Lord send you help from the holy place  
and give you support from Sion.  
May he grant you your hearts' desire  
and fulfill every one of your designs (Easter: alleluia).

Collect

1A Be attentive to our prayers, O Lord,  
and in your kindness uphold  
what you have established for the increase of the human race,  
so that the union you have created  
may be kept safe by your assistance.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

or:

1B O God, who in creating the human race  
willed that man and wife should be one,  
join, we pray, in a bond of inseparable love  
these your servants who are to be united in the covenant of marriage,  
so that, as you make their love fruitful,  
they may become, by your grace, witnesses to charity itself.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

Prayer over the Offerings

Receive, we pray, O Lord,  
the offering made on the occasion  
of this sealing of the sacred bond of Marriage,  
and, just as your goodness is its origin,  
may your providence guide its course.  
Through Christ our Lord.

Preface: The dignity of the marriage covenant.

V. The Lord be with you.  
R. And with your spirit.  
V. Lift up your hearts.  
R. We lift them up to the Lord.  
V. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
R. It is right and just.

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.  
For you have forged the covenant of marriage  
as a sweet yoke of harmony  
and an unbreakable bond of peace,  
so that the chaste and fruitful love of holy matrimony  
may serve to increase the children you adopt as your own.

By your providence and grace, O Lord,  
you accomplish the wonder of this twofold design:  
that, while the birth of children brings beauty to the world,  
their rebirth in Baptism gives increase to the Church,  
through Christ our Lord.  
Through him, with the angels and all the saints,  
we sing the hymn of your praise,  
as without end we acclaim: (Holy, holy, holy ...)

#### The Nuptial Blessing A

Dear brothers and sisters,  
let us humbly pray to the Lord  
that on these his servants, now married in Christ,  
he may mercifully pour out  
the blessing of his grace  
and make of one heart in love  
(by the sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood)  
those he has joined by a holy covenant.

*All pray in silence for a while.*

O God, who by your mighty power  
created all things out of nothing,  
and, when you had set in place  
the beginnings of the universe,  
formed man and woman in your own image,  
making the woman an inseparable helpmate to the man,  
that they might no longer be two, but one flesh,  
and taught that what you were pleased to make one  
must never be divided;  
O God, who consecrated the bond of marriage  
by so great a mystery  
that in the wedding covenant you foreshadowed  
the sacrament of Christ and his Church;  
O God, by whom woman is joined to man  
and the companionship they had in the beginning  
is endowed with the one blessing  
not forfeited by original sin  
nor washed away by the flood.  
look now with favor on these your servants,  
joined together in marriage,  
who ask to be strengthened by your blessing.  
send down on them the grace of the Holy Spirit  
and pour your love into their hearts,  
that they may remain faithful in the marriage covenant.  
May the grace of love and peace  
abide in your daughter N.,  
and let her always follow the example of those holy women  
whose praises are sung in the scriptures.  
may her husband entrust his heart to her,  
so that, acknowledging her as his equal  
and his joint heir to the life of grace,  
he may show her due honor  
and cherish her always  
with the love that Christ has for his Church.  
And now, Lord, we implore you:  
may these your servants  
hold fast to the faith and keep your commandments;  
made one in the flesh,

may they be blameless in all they do;  
and with the strength that comes from the Gospel,  
may they bear true witness to Christ before all;  
(may they be blessed with children,  
and prove themselves virtuous parents,  
who live to see their children's children).  
And grant that,  
reaching at last together the fullness of years  
for which they hope,  
they may come to the life of the blessed  
in the Kingdom of heaven.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
R. Amen.

Communion antiphon cf. Eph 5: 25, 27

Christ loved the Church and handed himself over for her,  
to present her as a holy and spotless bride for himself (Easter: alleluia).

Prayer after Communion

By the power of this sacrifice, O Lord,  
accompany with your loving favor  
what in your providence you have instituted,  
so as to make of one heart in love  
those you have already joined in this holy union  
(and replenished with the one Bread and the one Chalice).  
Through Christ our Lord.

Solemn Blessing at the end of mass

May God the eternal Father  
keep you of one heart in love for one another,  
that the peace of Christ may dwell in you  
and abide always in your home.

R. Amen.

May you be blessed in your children,  
have solace in your friends  
and enjoy true peace with everyone.

R. Amen.

May you be witnesses in the world to God's charity,  
so that the afflicted and needy who have known your kindness  
may one day receive you thankfully  
into the eternal dwelling of God.

R. Amen.

And may Almighty God bless all of you, who are gathered here,  
the Father, and the Son, •  
and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.



## Option B (RM 1183-1188)

Entrance antiphon cf. Ps 90 (89): 14, 17

At dawn, O Lord, fill us with your merciful love,  
and we shall exult and rejoice all our days.  
Let the favor of the Lord our god be upon us  
and upon the work of our hands (Easter: alleluia).

Collect

2A Be attentive to our prayers, O Lord,  
and in your kindness  
pour out your grace on these your servants (n. and n.),  
that, coming together before your altar,  
they may be confirmed in love for one another.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

or:

2B O God, who consecrated the bond of marriage  
by so great a mystery  
that in the wedding covenant you foreshadow  
the sacrament of Christ and his Church,  
grant, we pray, to these your servants,  
that what they receive in faith  
they may live out in deeds.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

Prayer over the offerings

Receive in your kindness, Lord,  
the offerings we bring in gladness before you,  
and in your fatherly love  
watch over those you have joined in a sacramental covenant.  
Through Christ our Lord.

Preface: The great sacrament of matrimony.

V. The Lord be with you.  
R. And with your spirit.  
V. Lift up your hearts.  
R. We lift them up to the Lord.  
V. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
R. It is right and just.

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,  
through Christ our Lord.  
For in him you have made a new covenant with your people,  
so that, as you have redeemed man and woman  
by the mystery of Christ's Death and Resurrection,  
so in Christ you might make them partakers of divine nature  
and joint heirs with him of heavenly glory.  
In the union of husband and wife  
you give a sign of Christ's loving gift of grace,  
so that the sacrament we celebrate



might draw us back more deeply  
into the wondrous design of your love.  
And so, with the angels and all the saints,  
we praise you, and without end we acclaim: (Holy...)

#### Nuptial Blessing B

Let us pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,  
who come to the altar as they begin their married life,  
that (partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ)  
they may always be bound together by love for one another.

*All pray in silence for a while.*

Holy Father,  
who formed man in your own image,  
male and female you created them,  
so that as husband and wife, united in body and heart,  
they might fulfill their calling in the world;  
O God, who, to reveal the great design you formed in your love,  
willed that the love of spouses for each other  
should foreshadow the covenant you graciously made with your people,  
so that, by fulfillment of the sacramental sign,  
the mystical marriage of Christ with his Church  
might become manifest  
in the union of husband and wife among your faithful;  
Graciously stretch out your right hand  
over these your servants (n. and n.), we pray,  
and pour into their hearts the power of the Holy Spirit.  
Grant, O Lord,  
that, as they enter upon this sacramental union,  
they may share with one another the gifts of your love  
and, by being for each other a sign of your presence,  
become one heart and one mind.  
May they also sustain, O Lord, by their deeds  
the home they are forming  
(and prepare their children  
to become members of your heavenly household  
by raising them in the way of the Gospel).  
Graciously crown with your blessings your daughter n.,  
so that, by being a good wife (and mother),  
she may bring warmth to her home with a love that is pure  
and adorn it with welcoming graciousness.  
Bestow a heavenly blessing also, O Lord,  
on n., your servant,  
that he may be a worthy, good and  
faithful husband (and a provident father).  
Grant, holy Father, that, desiring to approach your table  
as a couple joined in marriage in your presence,  
they may one day have the joy  
of taking part in your great banquet in heaven.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
R. Amen.

#### Communion antiphon Jn 13: 34

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another  
as I have loved you, says the Lord (Easter: alleluia).

#### Prayer after Communion

Having been made partakers at your table,

we pray, O Lord,  
that those who are united by the sacrament of marriage  
may always hold fast to you  
and proclaim your name to the world.  
Through Christ our Lord.

Solemn Blessing at the end of mass

May God the all-powerful Father grant you his joy  
and bless you in your children.

R. Amen.

May the only Begotten Son of God  
stand by you with compassion in good times and in bad.

R. Amen.

May the Holy Spirit of God  
always pour forth his love into your hearts.

R. Amen.

And may almighty God bless all of you, who are gathered here,  
the Father, and the Son,  
and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.



### Option C (RM 1189-1193)

Entrance antiphon cf. Ps 145 (144): 2, 9

I will bless you day after day, O Lord,  
and praise your name for ever and ever,  
for you are kind to all  
and compassionate to all your creatures (Easter: alleluia).

Collect

3A Grant, we pray, almighty God,  
that these your servants,  
now to be joined by the sacrament of matrimony,  
may grow in the faith they profess  
and enrich your Church with faithful offspring.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

or:

3B O God, who since the beginning of the world  
have blessed the increase of offspring,  
show favor to our supplications  
and pour forth the help of your blessing  
on these your servants (n. and n.),  
so that in the union of marriage  
they may be bound together  
in mutual affection,  
in likeness of mind,  
and in shared holiness.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

Prayer over the offerings

Show favor to our supplications, O Lord,  
and receive with a kindly countenance  
the oblations we offer for these your servants,  
joined now in a holy covenant,  
that through these mysteries  
they may be strengthened in love for one another and for you.  
Through Christ our Lord.

Preface: Matrimony as a sign of divine love.

V. The Lord be with you.  
R. And with your spirit.  
V. Lift up your hearts.  
R. We lift them up to the Lord.  
V. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
R. It is right and just.

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.  
For you willed that the human race,  
created by the gift of your goodness,  
should be raised to such high dignity  
that in the union of husband and wife  
you might bestow a true image of your love.

For those you created out of charity  
you call to the law of charity without ceasing  
and grant them a share in your eternal charity.  
And so, the sacrament of holy matrimony,  
as the abiding sign of your own love,  
consecrates the love of man and woman,  
through Christ our Lord.  
Through Him, with the angels and all the saints,  
we sing the hymn of your praise,  
as without end we acclaim:

#### Nuptial Blessing

Let us humbly invoke by our prayers, dear brothers and sisters,  
God's blessing upon this bride and groom,  
that in his kindness he may favor with his help  
those on whom he has bestowed the sacrament of matrimony.

*All pray in silence for a while.*

Holy Father, maker of the whole world,  
who created man and woman in your own image  
and willed that their union be crowned with your blessing,  
we humbly beseech you for these your servants,  
who are joined today in the sacrament of matrimony.  
May your abundant blessing, Lord,  
come down upon this bride, n.,  
and upon n., her companion for life,  
and may the power of your Holy Spirit  
set their hearts aflame from on high,  
so that, living out together the gift of matrimony,  
they may (adorn their family with children  
and) enrich the Church.  
In happiness may they praise you, O Lord,  
in sorrow may they seek you out;  
may they have the joy of your presence  
to assist them in their toil,  
and know that you are near  
to comfort them in their need;  
let them pray to you in the holy assembly  
and bear witness to you in the world,  
and after a happy old age,  
together with the circle of friends that surrounds them,  
may they come to the Kingdom of heaven.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
R. Amen.

#### Communion antiphon Ps 34 (33): 2, 9

I will bless the Lord at all times,  
praise of him is always in my mouth.  
taste and see that the Lord is good;  
blessed the man who seeks refuge in him (Easter: alleluia).

#### Prayer after Communion

Grant, we pray, almighty God,  
that the power of the sacrament we have received  
may find growth in these your servants  
and that the effects of the sacrifice we have offered  
may be felt by us all.  
Through Christ our Lord.

Solemn Blessing at the end of mass

May the Lord Jesus,  
who graced the marriage at Cana by his presence,  
bless you and your loved ones.

R. Amen.

May he, who loved the Church to the end,  
unceasingly pour his love into your hearts.

R. Amen.

May the Lord grant  
that, bearing witness to faith in his Resurrection,  
you may await with joy the blessed hope to come.

R. Amen.

And may almighty God bless all of you, who are gathered here,  
the Father, and the Son, •  
and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.



# Opening prayers (For Weddings outside of Mass)

## *Option 1*

Father, you have made the bond of marriage a holy mystery,  
a symbol of Christ's love for his Church.  
Hear our prayers for [Name] and [Name].  
With faith in you and in each other they  
pledge their love today.  
May their lives always bear witness to the reality of that love.  
We ask you this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

## *Option 2*

Father, hear our prayers for [Name] and [Name],  
who today are united in marriage before your altar.  
Give them your blessing,  
and strengthen their love for each other.  
We ask you this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

## *Option 3*

Almighty God,  
hear our prayers for [Name] and [Name],  
who have come here today to be united  
in the sacrament of marriage.  
Increase their faith in you and in each other,  
and through them bless your Church (with Christian children).  
We ask you this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

## *Option 4*

Father, when you created mankind  
you willed that man and wife should be one.  
Bind [Name] and [Name] in the loving union of marriage;  
and make their love fruitful so that they may be living witnesses  
to your divine love in the world.  
We ask you this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.





*The following Old Testament, Psalms, New Testament, and Gospel readings, as well as the commentaries can be found online at [www.foryourmarriage.org](http://www.foryourmarriage.org). In addition to the readings, this site has a number of resources that you may find helpful.*

*The commentaries were prepared by Rev. Darren M. Henson, a priest of the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas. Fr. Henson holds a licentiate in sacred theology from the University of St. Mary of the Lake. He has served as faculty at Loyola University in Chicago and adjunct faculty for Benedictine College, Atchison, KS, teaching liturgy and sacraments.*

## Old Testament Readings

### ***OT 1. Male and female he created them.***

A reading from the Book of Genesis 1:26-28, 31a

Then God said:

“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea,

the birds of the air, and the cattle,

and over all the wild animals

and all the creatures that crawl on the ground.”

God created man in his image;

in the image of God he created him;

male and female he created them.

God blessed them, saying:

“Be fertile and multiply;

fill the earth and subdue it.

Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air,

and all the living things that move on the earth.”

God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good.

The word of the Lord.

### **Commentary**

The Bible’s first book, Genesis, contains not one, but two episodes of creation. They offer differing details, and each contains unique riches. In this offering from the first chapter, human life is the crowning jewel of all cosmic things, made on the sixth day after the earth, sky, water, plants, and animals. Male and female are created at the same time and bear God’s Triune image (v. 26, “Let us make man...”). Made in the image of the creating God, men and women are to participate with God to bring about more life (vs. 28 “be fertile and multiply”). Yet this gift of giving life is intertwined with the gift of prudent stewardship. In this first creation story, God creates out of chaos by ordering it properly. Spouses are called to do the same. Filling the earth with life comes with the responsibility to subdue it (vs. 28), or discipline, calm, and cultivate it. This applies foremost though not exclusively to children, and then towards all life on earth. Peace in societies today begins with spouses participating in God’s desire of ordered harmony among all living things.

This text is used every year to begin the Easter Vigil. It is an elaborate nighttime feast celebrating powerful change and new spiritual life for those who are initiated into the Church. At a wedding, this reading signals the new realities and spiritual life that flow from marriage. New life, seen and unseen, will abound for married couples who view their relationship as a mirror of God’s ongoing act of creation.

***OT 2. The two of them become one body.***

A reading from the Book of Genesis 2:18-24

The Lord God said: "It is not good for the man to be alone.

I will make a suitable partner for him."

So the Lord God formed out of the ground

various wild animals and various birds of the air,

and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them;

whatever the man called each of them would be its name.

The man gave names to all the cattle,

all the birds of the air, and all wild animals;

but none proved to be the suitable partner for the man.

So the Lord God cast a deep sleep on the man,

and while he was asleep,

he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.

The Lord God then built up into a woman the rib

that he had taken from the man.

When he brought her to the man, the man said:

"This one, at last, is bone of my bones

and flesh of my flesh;

This one shall be called 'woman,'

for out of 'her man' this one has been taken."

That is why a man leaves his father and mother

and clings to his wife,

and the two of them become one body.

The word of the Lord.

**Commentary**

This second version of creation is vastly different from the first. God creates man first, and then the birds, wild animals, and other life forms – the very opposite from the previous account. Yet even with an abundance of natural life surrounding the man, something fundamental is lacking. This passage highlights the importance of human relationships, and the need for a strong society – one that begins with men and women in committed, mutually loving relationships.

As Catholics we do not look to the Bible's creation story for biological truths. Physicians attest that men and women have equal pairs of ribs. (In an ancient language, one word meant both "rib" and "life.") From the 'man' comes 'woman'. This passage leads one to ponder a deeper, spiritual truth. Between men and women there is an intimate connectedness, radical unity and kinship, as well as sexual attraction. When the two come together, especially in the sacredness of marriage, their connection is so life-giving, that all other relationships are secondary – even the link to parents who initially provided life. This passage is a biblical meditation on the more contemporary phrase that one's spouse is "my soul mate."

***OT 3. In his love for Rebekah, Isaac found solace after the death of his mother.***

A reading from the Book of Genesis 24:48-51, 58-67

The servant of Abraham said to Laban:

“I bowed down in worship to the Lord,  
blessing the Lord, the God of my master Abraham,  
who had led me on the right road  
to obtain the daughter of my master’s kinsman for his son.  
If, therefore, you have in mind to show true loyalty to my master,  
let me know;  
but if not, let me know that, too.  
I can then proceed accordingly.”

Laban and his household said in reply:

“This thing comes from the Lord;  
we can say nothing to you either for or against it.  
Here is Rebekah, ready for you;  
take her with you,  
that she may become the wife of your master’s son,  
as the Lord has said.”

So they called Rebekah and asked her,

“Do you wish to go with this man?”

She answered, “I do.”

At this they allowed their sister Rebekah and her nurse to take leave,  
along with Abraham’s servant and his men.

Invoking a blessing on Rebekah, they said:

“Sister, may you grow  
into thousands of myriads;  
And may your descendants gain possession  
of the gates of their enemies!”

Then Rebekah and her maids started out;  
they mounted their camels and followed the man.  
so the servant took Rebekah and went on his way.

Meanwhile Isaac had gone from Beer-lahai-roi  
and was living in the region of the Negeb.

One day toward evening he went out . . . in the field,  
and as he looked around, he noticed that camels were approaching.

Rebekah, too, was looking about, and when she saw him,  
she alighted from her camel and asked the servant,

“Who is the man out there, walking through the fields toward us?”

“That is my master,” replied the servant.

Then she covered herself with her veil.

The servant recounted to Isaac all the things he had done.

Then Isaac took Rebekah into his tent;  
he married her, and thus she became his wife.

In his love for her Isaac found solace  
after the death of his mother Sarah.

The word of the Lord.

**Commentary**

This text is but a piece of a larger story riddled with challenged relationships, unlikely children, and unforeseen circumstances. Key to the story is Abraham’s total faith that God will provide and guide. Abraham had left his homeland. Landing in Canaan at a very old age, his barren wife Sarah remarkably gives birth to their son, Isaac. When Sarah dies, Abraham looks to give Isaac a wife.

This snippet from that story appears to be a pre-arranged marriage, but a second consideration of the text reveals a marriage made by God. Abraham’s main intent is not to pick his son’s wife. Instead, he seeks the fulfillment of a promise made by God to give Abraham descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. This reading from Genesis’ 24th chapter begins with verse 48. Previously in the chapter Abraham exhorted his servant Laban to pray to the Lord God, who had blessed him in all things (vs. 1). Prayer helps to verify that this process is done with God. Laban prays

to be guided to the right young woman. Rebekah's consent in the matter (vs. 58) verifies that she is participating in God's will, not some coercive act. Isaac's newfound comfort further confirms all this is God's handiwork. Isaac does not merely accept her. He took her into his tent. He loved her, and they married.

The Catholic Rite of Marriage steers clear of any hint of arranged marriages. Like this passage from Genesis, the bride and groom first declare their own freedom and consent to marry before exchanging vows. Parents are not questioned. The rite does not envision anyone "giving the bride away." In the eyes of the Church, both bride and groom are free individuals who have discerned their love is from God. For this reason, the Church directs that the entrance begin with the priest at the doors of the church greeting the bride and the groom, showing that the Church shares in their joy.

***OT 4. May the Lord of heaven prosper you both. May he grant you mercy and peace.***

A reading from the Book of Tobit 7:6-14  
Raphael and Tobiah entered the house of Raguel and greeted him.  
Raguel sprang up and kissed Tobiah, shedding tears of joy.  
But when he heard that Tobit had lost his eyesight,  
he was grieved and wept aloud.  
He said to Tobiah:  
“My child, God bless you!  
You are the son of a noble and good father.  
But what a terrible misfortune  
that such a righteous and charitable man  
should be afflicted with blindness!”  
He continued to weep in the arms of his kinsman Tobiah.  
His wife Edna also wept for Tobit;  
and even their daughter Sarah began to weep.  
Afterward, Raguel slaughtered a ram from the flock  
and gave them a cordial reception.  
When they had bathed and reclined to eat,  
Tobiah said to Raphael, “Brother Azariah,  
ask Raguel to let me marry my kinswoman Sarah.”  
Raguel overheard the words;  
so he said to the boy:  
“Eat and drink and be merry tonight,  
for no man is more entitled to marry my daughter Sarah  
than you, brother.  
Besides, not even I have the right to give her to anyone but you,  
because you are my closest relative.  
But I will explain the situation to you very frankly.  
I have given her in marriage to seven men,  
all of whom were kinsmen of ours,  
and all died on the very night they approached her.  
But now, son, eat and drink.  
I am sure the Lord will look after you both.”  
Tobiah answered, “I will eat or drink nothing  
until you set aside what belongs to me.”  
Raguel said to him: “I will do it.  
She is yours according to the decree of the Book of Moses.  
Your marriage to her has been decided in heaven!  
Take your kinswoman  
from now on you are her love,  
and she is your beloved.  
She is yours today and ever after.  
And tonight, son, may the Lord of heaven prosper you both.  
May he grant you mercy and peace.”  
Then Raguel called his daughter Sarah, and she came to him.  
He took her by the hand and gave her to Tobiah with the words:  
“Take her according to the law.  
According to the decree written in the Book of Moses she is your wife.  
Take her and bring her back safely to your father.  
And may the God of heaven grant both of you peace and prosperity.”  
He then called her mother and told her to bring a scroll,  
so that he might draw up a marriage contract  
stating that he gave Sarah to Tobiah as his wife  
according to the decree of the Mosaic law.  
Her mother brought the scroll,  
and he drew up the contract,  
to which they affixed their seal.

Afterward they began to eat and drink.  
The word of the Lord.

### **Commentary**

There are some fantastically incredible stories in the Scriptures. This one ought to be toward the top. Though fiction, the book of Tobit portrays the ordinary life of an Israelite family. It offers stories of life, death, food, family, and God. A main theme is the nature of human suffering. Some suffering comes from demonic forces. Other suffering can be initiated by God as a corrective measure so the selfish and righteous see God's justice.

Tobit is blind. Perhaps this is a metaphor for him to trust in the wife that God's angel (Raphael / Azariah) will choose for his son Tobiah. Sarah suffers from having lost seven husbands after consummating her marriage to each. If past events are any indication, then Sarah's new husband will be dead. Such does not happen. Like the previous scripture option from Genesis 24, their happy marriage and newfound life is a biblical way of revealing that marriage is a participation in God's divine plan. The imposed suffering on the two did in fact lead them more closely to God's will.

This passage does not fit the conventional storyline for marriage most couples imagine. Yet it has a unique inner beauty and inspiration. Look closely. The passage contains heartfelt prayers: "I am sure the Lord will look after you both" (vs. 11); "Your marriage to her has been decided in heaven" (vs. 11); "And may the God of heaven grant both of you peace and prosperity" (vs. 12). The couple overcame major obstacles. Couples in today's society face great difficulties as well, and many bring their own suffering. Passages from this text appear in the final blessing for marriage. Couples may find this passage helps them to trust in God's divine providence regardless of hardships they face.

***OT 5. Allow us to live together to a happy old age.***

A reading from the Book of Tobit 8:4b-8

On their wedding night Tobiah arose from bed and said to his wife,

“Sister, get up. Let us pray and beg our Lord  
to have mercy on us and to grant us deliverance.”

Sarah got up, and they started to pray  
and beg that deliverance might be theirs.

They began with these words:

“Blessed are you, O God of our fathers;  
praised be your name forever and ever.

Let the heavens and all your creation  
praise you forever.

You made Adam and you gave him his wife Eve  
to be his help and support;  
and from these two the human race descended.

You said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone;  
let us make him a partner like himself.’

Now, Lord, you know that I take this wife of mine  
not because of lust,  
but for a noble purpose.

Call down your mercy on me and on her,  
and allow us to live together to a happy old age.”

They said together, “Amen, amen.”

The word of the Lord.

**Commentary**

From their marriage bed, Tobiah rises and tells his bride to get up to join him in prayer to God. Given her history – seven previous husbands dying after making love to Sarah – Tobiah’s request is more than understandable. It’s nearly a necessity! What follows is a tender prayer that any married couple would hope to speak. He blesses the God of his ancestors and praises the God of creation who fashioned Adam and Eve. Just as Eve was a perfect complement to Adam, Tobiah sees Sarah as an equally fitting partner. He tells God that he has taken his wife not for sexual pleasure but for true virtue. He begs God for mercy upon them both and that they may reach old age together. Sarah adds her voice to the prayer as they conclude, “Amen.”

This text reveals that marriage is not just to temper sexual desires, but that real spiritual strength is found in the sacrament. It has a noble purpose – which is to help, support, and mutually uphold one another into old age. This reading encourages couples to foster a shared prayer life, and reveals the blessings that flow from it.



***OT 6. The woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.***

A reading from the Book of Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

When one finds a worthy wife,  
her value is far beyond pearls.  
Her husband, entrusting his heart to her,  
has an unfailing prize.  
She brings him good, and not evil,  
all the days of her life.  
She obtains wool and flax  
and makes cloth with skillful hands.  
She puts her hands to the distaff,  
and her fingers ply the spindle.  
She reaches out her hands to the poor,  
and extends her arms to the needy.  
Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting;  
the woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.  
Give her a reward of her labors,  
and let her works praise her at the city gates.  
The word of the Lord.

**Commentary**

The book of Proverbs is a collection of mostly two-line sayings from sages who studied God, creation, and human nature. These insights of wisdom tend to focus on covenant and redemption. This passage appears at the end of the book and is unusually longer than the shorter sayings that preceded it.

Many couples will find this passage distasteful as it addresses the wife with only a brief mention of the husband. It emphasizes the importance of a grounding faith in the Lord which will be stronger than fleeting beauty or passing charm. Fearing the Lord means awe, obedience, and right relationship with God as the foundation for living wisely. The good husband trusts his wife because she trusts in the Lord. The passage supports the idea that an important aspect of marriage is for couples to walk with each other on their spiritual journey until they reach the gates of God's eternal love.

***OT 7. Stern as death is love.***

A reading from the Song of Songs 2:8-10, 14, 16a; 8:6-7a  
Hark! my lover—here he comes  
springing across the mountains,  
leaping across the hills.  
My lover is like a gazelle  
or a young stag.  
Here he stands behind our wall,  
gazing through the windows,  
peering through the lattices.  
My lover speaks; he says to me,  
“Arise, my beloved, my dove, my beautiful one, and come!  
“O my dove in the clefts of the rock,  
in the secret recesses of the cliff,  
Let me see you,  
let me hear your voice,  
for your voice is sweet,  
and you are lovely.”  
My lover belongs to me and I to him.  
He says to me:  
“Set me as a seal on your heart,  
as a seal on your arm;  
For stern as death is love,  
relentless as the nether world is devotion;  
its flames are a blazing fire.  
Deep waters cannot quench love,  
nor floods sweep it away.”  
The word of the Lord.

**Commentary**

Readers are often shocked to find this little-known book tucked into the pages of the Old Testament. It is a love poem describing two young lovers discovering the beauty of their created bodies, and their desire to share it in love and mutual fidelity. Parts of the book express erotic love. The gift of sexuality is affirmed and portrayed without apology. There is radical equality with both lovers desiring to share in it with equal intensity. Love is seen as a communion of souls.

This passage seems operatic. It describes a young man appearing at his beloved's window just before dawn, wooing her into the countryside blossoming with springtime life and promise. The maiden makes a statement that beautifully describes the mutuality of marriage, “My lover belongs to me, and I to him.” He then declares the ferocity of love, for just as stern as death is, love is even more relentless. Love is eternal.

***OT 8. Like the sun rising in the Lord's heavens, the beauty of a virtuous wife is the radiance of her home.***

A reading from the Book of Sirach 26:1-4, 13-16

Blessed the husband of a good wife,  
twice-lengthened are his days;

A worthy wife brings joy to her husband,  
peaceful and full is his life.

A good wife is a generous gift  
bestowed upon him who fears the Lord;  
Be he rich or poor, his heart is content,  
and a smile is ever on his face.

A gracious wife delights her husband,  
her thoughtfulness puts flesh on his bones;  
A gift from the Lord is her governed speech,  
and her firm virtue is of surpassing worth.

Choicest of blessings is a modest wife,  
priceless her chaste soul.

A holy and decent woman adds grace upon grace;  
indeed, no price is worthy of her temperate soul.

Like the sun rising in the Lord's heavens,  
the beauty of a virtuous wife is the radiance of her home.

The word of the Lord.

**Commentary**

The book of Sirach, is frequently referred to as "Ecclesiasticus," or "The Book of Wisdom." It is the wisdom writings of Ben Sira.

Like the passage from Proverbs (OT option #6), this one emphasizes the role of the wife. She can reveal God's blessing to her husband. He can expect to live twice as long with a good wife, for she brings joy and peace to him. These were traditional blessings, and they are more important than wealth. While it is a compliment to the wife to be compared to the rising of the sun – that which gives life, hope, and promise – the passage has a noticeable tinge of inequality to it. It appears that the woman is to spend her life pleasing her husband and feeding him. At its best, it shows how people can be a blessing from God.

***OT 9. I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.***

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah 31:31-32a, 33-34a

The days are coming, says the Lord,  
when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel  
and the house of Judah.

It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers:  
the day I took them by the hand  
to lead them forth from the land of Egypt.

But this is the covenant which I will make  
with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord.

I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts;

I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

No longer will they have need to teach their friends and relatives  
how to know the Lord.

All, from least to greatest, shall know me, says the Lord.

The word of the Lord.

**Commentary**

Most couples will not immediately see the hidden beauty and the strength this passage has in its depth of illuminating the marital covenant. The marriage vows bind the couple into a covenant. This passage describe the ideal vision of what that covenant can look like.

Jeremiah was a prophet who could see and hear things from God that others could not. He is on his prophetic tower evaluating the past and future. In the past, God had made a covenant with the people, promising to be their God if they would be faithful to him in return. The covenant was broken. The people failed in fidelity. In this passage, Jeremiah speaks about a new covenant that will be given by God, “I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” The staggering difference in this second covenant is the absence of one little word, “if.” By omitting the word “if” God is making this covenant unconditionally. God is pledging complete, unconditional love. God has forgiven them for their infidelity, and this law of loving forgiveness is written on their hearts.

This image of unconditional love as the foundation for a covenant is a mirror for what married couples strive to do and aspire to be for each another. Sacramental marriage reveals to the world this incredible love that God has for us.

Husbands and wives enter into this sacrament with the same commitment to love as God has shown his people.

Couples with a deep committed faith in God, those who have reconciled from difficult infidelities, and those committed to forgiveness and unconditional love will want to seriously consider this eloquent passage.



# Responsorial Psalms

Preferably, the Responsorial Psalm would be sung (see music selections for some settings).

## ***RP 1. 33:12 and 18, 20-21, 22***

R. (5b) **The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.**

Blessed the nation whose God is the Lord,  
the people he has chosen for his own inheritance.  
But see, the eyes of the Lord are upon those who fear him,  
upon those who hope for his kindness.

Our soul waits for the Lord,  
who is our help and our shield,  
For in him our hearts rejoice;  
in his holy name we trust.

May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us  
who have put our hope in you.

## ***RP 2. 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9***

R. (2a) **I will bless the Lord at all times.**

OR:

R. (9a) **Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

I will bless the Lord at all times;  
his praise shall be ever in my mouth.  
Let my soul glory in the Lord;  
the lowly will hear me and be glad.

Glorify the Lord with me,  
let us together extol his name.  
I sought the Lord, and he answered me  
and delivered me from all my fears.

Look to him that you may be radiant with joy,  
and your faces may not blush with shame.  
When the poor one called out, the Lord heard,  
and from all his distress he saved him.

The angel of the Lord encamps  
around those who fear him, and delivers them.  
Taste and see how good the Lord is;  
blessed the man who takes refuge in him.

***RP 3. 103:1-2, 8 and 13, 17-18a***

**R. (8a) The Lord is kind and merciful.**

**OR:**

**R. (see 17) The Lord's kindness is everlasting to those who fear him.**

Bless the Lord, O my soul;  
and all my being, bless his holy name.  
Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and forget not all his benefits.

Merciful and gracious is the Lord,  
slow to anger and abounding in kindness.  
As a father has compassion on his children,  
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.

But the kindness of the Lord is from eternity  
to eternity toward those who fear him,  
And his justice towards children's children  
among those who keep his covenant.

***RP 4. 112:1bc-2, 3-4, 5-7a, 7b-8, 9***

**R. (see 1) Blessed the man who greatly delights in the Lord's commands.**

**OR:**

**R. Alleluia.**

Blessed the man who fears the Lord,  
who greatly delights in his commands.  
His posterity shall be mighty upon the earth;  
the upright generation shall be blessed.

Wealth and riches shall be in his house;  
his generosity shall endure forever.  
Light shines through the darkness for the upright;  
he is gracious and merciful and just.

Well for the man who is gracious and lends,  
who conducts his affairs with justice;  
He shall never be moved;  
the just one shall be in everlasting remembrance.  
An evil report he shall not fear.

His heart is firm, trusting in the Lord.  
His heart is steadfast; he shall not fear  
till he looks down upon his foes.

Lavishly he gives to the poor;  
his generosity shall endure forever;  
his horn shall be exalted in glory.

***RP 5. 128:1-2, 3, 4-5***

R. (see 1a) **Blessed are those who fear the Lord.**

OR:

R. (4) **See how the Lord blesses those who fear him.**

Blessed are you who fear the Lord,  
who walk in his ways!

For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork;  
blessed shall you be, and favored.

Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine  
in the recesses of your home;  
Your children like olive plants  
around your table.

Behold, thus is the man blessed  
who fears the Lord.  
The Lord bless you from Zion:  
may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem  
all the days of your life.

***RP 6. 145:8-9, 10 and 15, 17-18***

R. (9a) **The Lord is compassionate toward all his works.**

The Lord is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger and of great kindness.

The Lord is good to all  
and compassionate toward all his works.

Let all your works give you thanks, O Lord,  
and let your faithful ones bless you.  
The eyes of all look hopefully to you  
and you give them their food in due season.

The Lord is just in all his ways  
and holy in all his works.  
The Lord is near to all who call upon him,  
to all who call upon him in truth.



***RP 7.148:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-13a, 13c-14a***

**R. (13a) Let all praise the name of the Lord.**

**OR:**

**R. Alleluia.**

Alleluia.

Praise the Lord from the heavens,  
praise him in the heights;  
Praise him, all you his angels,  
praise him, all you his hosts.

Praise him, sun and moon;  
praise him, all you shining stars.  
Praise him, you highest heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens.

You mountains and all you hills,  
you fruit trees and all you cedars;  
You wild beasts and all tame animals,  
you creeping things and winged fowl.

Let the kings of the earth and all peoples,  
the princes and all the judges of the earth,  
Young men too, and maidens,  
old men and boys,  
Praise the name of the Lord,  
for his name alone is exalted.

His majesty is above earth and heaven,  
and he has lifted his horn above the people.

# New Testament Readings

## *NT 1. What will separate us from the love of Christ?*

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39

Brothers and sisters:

If God is for us, who can be against us?

He did not spare his own Son

but handed him over for us all,

how will he not also give us everything else along with him?

Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones?

It is God who acquits us.

Who will condemn?

It is Christ Jesus who died, rather, was raised,

who also is at the right hand of God,

who indeed intercedes for us.

What will separate us from the love of Christ?

Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine,

or nakedness, or peril, or the sword?

No, in all these things, we conquer overwhelmingly  
through him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life,

nor angels, nor principalities,

nor present things, nor future things,

nor powers, nor height, nor depth,

nor any other creature will be able to separate us

from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

## **Commentary**

This reading concludes a long opening section in Paul's letter to the Christian community living in Rome. He preaches that the Gospel announces salvation for all peoples whether they are Jews or Gentiles. Then he offers reflections on our justification to God. Thus, the questions in this passage sound a bit like a back-and-forth argument. It is Christ whose death and resurrection has justified us and now intercedes on our behalf before God (vs. 34). A love that Christ demonstrates by dying for all of us is a bond of love that cannot be broken by anything – earthly, supernatural, or otherwise (vs. 38-39).

The Church offers a sacramental marriage, something different and in addition to a civil marriage. Sacraments are an encounter with and a participation in the life of Christ Jesus. Couples who marry in the Catholic Church root their relationship in this inspiring vision of Christ's love. It is a love that unites and a love that is unbreakable. Husbands and wives who share this strength of love can be as confident as St. Paul knowing that when hardship, suffering, and difficulties arise, their love will help carry them through. No hardship from the heavens or from earth, from creatures, rulers, or angels can destroy their marriage bond. Christ's love was victorious, and any love that imitates his will share in the same gift.

***NT 2. Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.***

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans 12:1-2, 9-18

I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God,  
to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice,  
holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship.  
Do not conform yourselves to this age  
but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,  
that you may discern what is the will of God,  
what is good and pleasing and perfect.  
Let love be sincere;  
hate what is evil,  
hold on to what is good;  
love one another with mutual affection;  
anticipate one another in showing honor.  
Do not grow slack in zeal,  
be fervent in spirit,  
serve the Lord.  
Rejoice in hope,  
endure in affliction,  
persevere in prayer.  
Contribute to the needs of the holy ones,  
exercise hospitality.  
Bless those who persecute you,  
bless and do not curse them.  
Rejoice with those who rejoice,  
weep with those who weep.  
Have the same regard for one another;  
do not be haughty but associate with the lowly;  
do not be wise in your own estimation.  
Do not repay anyone evil for evil;  
be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all.  
If possible, on your part, live at peace with all.  
The word of the Lord.

**Commentary**

When St. Paul speaks of a living sacrifice, the people would initially think this is an impossible contradiction. Sacrifices entailed the blood of an animal offered in the temple. This was done to express the moral life, to make up for one's faults, and to please God. St. Paul, however, is preaching after Jesus' blood was shed on the cross. That sacrifice of his own life was the fulfillment of all sacrifices. The Apostle suggests that those who follow Christ are to offer their bodies as living sacrifices. This is the paradox of faith—that sacrificing, most especially the sacrifice of the cross, gives life and shuns death. In other words, St. Paul is saying that something completely new is taking place because of Christ's death on the cross and his resurrection. The lives of the Christian believers are to look different, and they are to embrace a new way of living in the world because of the beliefs they hold.

Husbands and wives must compromise. A successful compromise entails sacrifice from both. The marriage vows state that each is willing to lovingly sacrifice for the other, whatever the cost. The second portion of this reading outlines a series of outward and visible actions that one can do to reflect sacrificial love that benefits others while also pleasing God. This list of high ideals will inspire many couples, yet it is intended to be a sign for all believers.

Couples who choose the shorter option of this reading will miss some wonderful passages: "weep with those who weep," "have the same regard for one another," "do not repay anyone evil for evil," "on your part, live at peace with all." These images express the hopes for many couples, and should be the ideals for all. Proclaiming them will add to the joy of the celebration.

***NT 3. Welcome one another as Christ welcomed you.***

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans 15:1b-3a, 5-7, 13

Brothers and sisters:

We ought to put up with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves;  
let each of us please our neighbor for the good,  
for building up.

For Christ did not please himself.

May the God of endurance and encouragement  
grant you to think in harmony with one another,  
in keeping with Christ Jesus,

that with one accord you may with one voice  
glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you,  
or the glory of God.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,  
so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The word of the Lord.

**Commentary**

This reading emphasizes St. Paul's strong hope that the Christian community in Rome might live in harmony. With different people in our global society today, we hear much about living peacefully with all. We use phrases like, "we agree to disagree;" "we respect one another;" or "we tolerate the things we don't like." Some married couples find that these phrases can balance the differences in their relationship. However, St. Paul calls for a particular expression of harmony, based on an imitating of Christ.

This reading will clearly remind both bride and groom that the success of their marriage will come when they lose track of their own selves and focus their energies on their spouse. Efforts that are made for the good of the other will build up the marriage. Christ has accepted and even welcomed us with all our shortcomings and faults. The loving couple will seek to allow their love to go beyond themselves to friends, family, and even strangers. Couples with convictions about improving their society and faith community will want to consider this reading. Younger couples looking forward to long years of marriage will also appreciate the prayer for endurance, encouragement, joy, and peace.

***NT 4. Your body is a temple of the Spirit.***

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20

Brothers and sisters:

The body is not for immorality, but for the Lord,

And the Lord is for the body;

God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power.

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?

Whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

Avoid immorality.

Every other sin a person commits is outside the body,

but the immoral person sins against his own body.

Do you not know that your body

is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you,

whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

For you have been purchased at a price.

Therefore glorify God in your body.

The word of the Lord.

**Commentary**

The apostle Paul writes some of his most extensive thoughts to the Corinthians. In these letters he responds to various problems occurring in Corinth. Some are not all that different from society today, including marital obligations and sexual immorality. When this reading is proclaimed before an assembly gathered for a wedding, all will know the immorality referenced in the opening phrase is sexual in nature. When read at the wedding, this reading does not have to be dour or come across as a finger shaking. Rather it upholds the supernatural beauty hidden in the human body. This scripture passage supports the Catholic teaching of abstaining from sexual intercourse until marriage, precisely because of the dignity given to each individual human body. Sexual relations affect both the individual and collective Christian body—the community. Just as bodily actions can cause harm to others and tear down God’s kingdom, so too can they be used to glorify God (vs. 20). Paul states that the body is to be conformed to the Lord. He refers to the Risen Lord (vs. 14) because the resurrected body of Jesus is radiant and glorifies God – an image of what our bodies can be. Furthermore, our bodies are a fitting place for the Holy Spirit (vs. 19). When viewed as holding the potential to glorify God, couples might grow to see their sexual intimacy as a sign of the sacred.

***NT 5. If I do not have love, I gain nothing.***

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians 12:31–13:8a

Brothers and sisters:

Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts.

But I shall show you a still more excellent way.

If I speak in human and angelic tongues

but do not have love,

I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal.

And if I have the gift of prophecy

and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge;

if I have all faith so as to move mountains,

but do not have love, I am nothing.

If I give away everything I own,

and if I hand my body over so that I may boast

but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind.

It is not jealous, is not pompous,

it is not inflated, it is not rude,

it does not seek its own interests,

it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing

but rejoices with the truth.

It bears all things, believes all things,

hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.

The word of the Lord.

**Commentary**

This passage is known as a hymn of love. It is popular for Catholics and other Christians, and it tugs at the heartstrings of engaged couples as soon as they glance over the options. Most will not initially realize that St. Paul is not talking directly to husbands and wives. He is addressing many concerns within Corinth's Christian community and is seeking to strengthen their overall unity. The community appears to have lost some of the vision of Gospel living. Thus, the apostle offers these thoughts.

This bold Christian view of love demonstrates clearly that it cannot be reduced to a romantic emotion. Love looks like something. Here, St. Paul describes it with poetic detail. He tells what love is – patient, kind, enduring– as well as what it is not – jealous, pompous, inflated, rude, quick-tempered. The reading also foretells what happens when love is absent. Without it, lives and relationships are like a noisy gong. We can accumulate things, be showered with gifts, and even give things away, yet without love, all is worthless. Really, what Paul is describing, is a love that looks like Christ, the one who is Love incarnate.

***NT 6. This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the Church.***

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians 5:2a, 21-33

Brothers and sisters:

Live in love, as Christ loved us  
and handed himself over for us.

Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives should be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord.

For the husband is head of his wife  
just as Christ is head of the Church,  
he himself the savior of the body.

As the Church is subordinate to Christ,  
so wives should be subordinate to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives,  
even as Christ loved the Church  
and handed himself over for her to sanctify her,  
cleansing her by the bath of water with the word,  
that he might present to himself the Church in splendor,  
without spot or wrinkle or any such thing,  
that she might be holy and without blemish.

So also husbands should love their wives as their own bodies.

He who loves his wife loves himself.

For no one hates his own flesh  
but rather nourishes and cherishes it,  
even as Christ does the Church,  
because we are members of his Body.

For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother  
and be joined to his wife,  
and the two shall become one flesh.

This is a great mystery,  
but I speak in reference to Christ and the Church.

In any case, each one of you should love his wife as himself,  
and the wife should respect her husband.

The word of the Lord.

**Commentary**

Couples looking for a clear, strong image of sacramental marriage will gravitate toward this passage. It is the most expressive passage in the New Testament regarding marriage. It is also complex. Some couples will dismiss it as objectionable to a contemporary perspective of spousal love. The language within the reading can pose pastoral challenges. Yet couples who pray with this passage might trade in their initial objections for a spirited embrace of the vision of marriage offered here.

The author gives an extended meditation on the second creation story and quotes it directly (Genesis 2:18-24, 2nd Old Testament option). The author is very familiar with the Gospel of Christ Jesus, crucified and raised from the dead.

Christ's actions of suffering, dying, and rising make all the difference in the world, even to husbands and wives. The initial verse (2) indicates how to interpret this passage: "Live in love, as Christ loved us, and handed himself over for us." Christ did this for the Church, the living body of believers. Married couples constitute the domestic church. Their mutual love should mirror the love Christ demonstrated. They are not expected to give their lives for the whole world, but they are to offer their lives for their spouse, the one they love. It is a love that is offered and given for another, or as the author states, "be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ" (vs. 21).

Some believe this passage unfairly treats women. The passage uses different verbs—to be subordinate, and to love—to describe the actions of wives and husbands, but the intent is the same. Both are to mutually give of themselves and freely love the other all for the sake and unity of their family.

The author stresses the unity present in all creation. When husbands and wives mutually give and love one another in a way that imitates Christ, they help to strengthen the unity in society. All is connected, and this exhortation to spouses to live as Christ is a part of his larger mission "to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth," (1:10). The shortened option removes the two more glaring references to subordinate wives. This might be the wiser option, especially if the person preaching does not intend to elaborate on this particular scriptural image.

***NT 7. The God of peace will be with you.***

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians 4:4-9

Brothers and sisters:

Rejoice in the Lord always.

I shall say it again: rejoice!

Your kindness should be known to all.

The Lord is near.

Have no anxiety at all, but in everything,  
by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,  
make your requests known to God.

Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding  
will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers and sisters,  
whatever is true, whatever is honorable,  
whatever is just, whatever is pure,  
whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious,  
if there is any excellence  
and if there is anything worthy of praise,  
think about these things.

Keep on doing what you have learned and received  
and heard and seen in me.

Then the God of peace will be with you.

The word of the Lord.

**Commentary**

This passage urges the Christian people of Philippi to live fully in the ideals of truth, justice, and love, all the while savoring God's peace that will follow them. This is a worthy passage for a marriage liturgy, particularly because the Catholic Church believes that marriages and families are the very building blocks of society. A couple that humbly prays to God, keeps their hearts rooted in Christ, and seeks truth, justice, and love, will be a couple that promotes peace in their home and in society.

Weddings in the United States all too easily turn into elaborate productions and can be the source of enormous stress for the couple and their friends. Couples will bring their doubts and worries with them to the wedding celebration. Some questions linger: Will we be able to establish a home we like? What kind of parents will we be? How will we work out our financial challenges? This passage helps to put all those many things into perspective as it boldly encourages, "Have no anxiety at all." It promotes a radical dependence upon God, whose peace "surpasses all understanding." Starting a covenanted relationship with the firm belief and proclamation that "the God of peace will be with you," is a comforting truth, and will be reason for bride, groom, and guests to rejoice!



***NT 8. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection.***

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians 3:12-17

Brothers and sisters:

Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved,  
heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience,  
bearing with one another and forgiving one another,  
if one has a grievance against another;  
as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do.

And over all these put on love,  
that is, the bond of perfection.

And let the peace of Christ control your hearts,  
the peace into which you were also called in one Body.

And be thankful.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,  
as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another,  
singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs  
with gratitude in your hearts to God.

And whatever you do, in word or in deed,  
do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,  
giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The word of the Lord.

**Commentary**

This selection of the Colossians letter describes to the people what they should do now, in light of their resurrection with Christ Jesus. Throughout much of the New Testament there are descriptions of what is necessary for a good and flourishing Christian community. These readings work well for the wedding liturgy, for the ideals of a good society are the ideals for a good marriage.

The list of characteristics that opens the passage is one that every couple should regularly review. Spending a lifetime growing richly in heartfelt compassion, humility, gentleness, forgiveness, etc. will be a lifetime well spent. The perfection of these attributes will be love. The biblical image of love is not an emotion or feeling, but here, it is the glue and the motivator for each person to pursue a more Christ-like way of life.

Verse 15 references the "Body," which is the Church as the Body of Christ. But in the wedding liturgy, it could refer to the fact that the two now become one through this sacrament. This reading would be a nice complement to the Genesis and Gospel readings referencing the two becoming one flesh, one body.

The passage ends with an inspiring command to "let the word of Christ dwell in your richly," and in all things, "give thanks to God the Father." For Catholics, this can be a gentle reminder of the importance of Sunday Mass. We open our hearts to receive the word of Christ when the scriptures are proclaimed at Mass, and we give thanks at the altar of the Lord. We go to Mass not out mere obligation, but out of love, a love which binds us to one another and to God who is Love.

***NT 9. Let marriage be held in honor by all.***

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews 13:1-4a, 5-6b

Brothers and sisters:

Let mutual love continue.

Do not neglect hospitality,

for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels.

Be mindful of prisoners as if sharing their imprisonment,

and of the ill-treated as of yourselves,

for you also are in the body.

Let marriage be honored among all

and the marriage bed be kept undefiled.

Let your life be free from love of money

but be content with what you have,

for he has said, I will never forsake you or abandon you.

Thus we may say with confidence:

The Lord is my helper,

and I will not be afraid.

The word of the Lord.

**Commentary**

In marriage preparation an often cited phrase is that it takes three to make the marriage successful: the husband, the wife, and God. This short passage speaks to the ways that God can be interwoven with the life of the couple. Generous hospitality can lead to encounters with divine realities. Sharing in the sufferings and hardships of others is a virtue. Loving God and loving one another should clearly take a greater priority than preoccupations with money. These short examples illustrate how the Lord lovingly sustains with us.

Couples who have had struggles in their lives might be drawn to this passage. Those who resist the societal expectations of an extravagant wedding celebration and those who do not have abundant financial resources will find themselves at home with this passage. In place of household gifts for the couple, some are directing guests to make contributions to charitable organizations. This passage certainly reinforces that social consciousness. Those who have seen the Lord with them in their need in the past might use this passage as a proclamation of faith that they trust in God's presence with them as they embark upon their married life.

***NT 10. Be of one mind, sympathetic, loving toward one another.***

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Peter 3:1-9

Beloved:

You wives should be subordinate to your husbands so that,  
even if some disobey the word,  
they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct  
when they observe your reverent and chaste behavior.

Your adornment should not be an external one:  
braiding the hair, wearing gold jewelry, or dressing in fine clothes,  
but rather the hidden character of the heart,  
expressed in the imperishable beauty  
of a gentle and calm disposition,  
which is precious in the sight of God.

For this is also how the holy women who hoped in God  
once used to adorn themselves  
and were subordinate to their husbands;  
thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him "Lord."  
You are her children when you do what is good  
and fear no intimidation.

Likewise, you husbands should live with your wives in understanding,  
showing honor to the weaker female sex,  
since we are joint heirs of the gift of life,  
so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Finally, all of you, be of one mind, sympathetic,  
loving toward one another, compassionate, humble.

Do not return evil for evil, or insult for insult;  
but, on the contrary, a blessing, because to this you were called,  
that you might inherit a blessing.

The word of the Lord.

**Commentary**

This letter was originally sent to five Roman provinces in Asia Minor where Christianity had taken root in some small pockets. The Romans were nervous of outside religions like Christianity. Their society was strongly patriarchal, and they feared that strange, new religions would cause revolts. This is why it includes household codes, and ethical statements to wives, slaves, and children.

That bit of background might help to understand the harsh tone of this passage to 21st century readers. The bulk of the reading is directed toward wives. There is mentioned that "husbands should live with your wives in understanding, showing honor." Readers will resonate more favorably with the vision for married life in the final lines that encourage them to be of one mind, loving one another compassionately and humbly. It challenges the couple to resist the temptation to play the blame game, "Do not return evil for evil, or insult for insult." It calls them to a higher way of relating, by striving to be a blessing for one another.

### ***NT 11. Love in deed and in truth***

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John 3:18-24

Children, let us love not in word or speech  
but in deed and truth.

Now this is how we shall know that we belong to the truth  
and reassure our hearts before him  
in whatever our hearts condemn,  
for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything.  
Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us,  
we have confidence in God  
and receive from him whatever we ask,  
because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.  
And his commandment is this:  
we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ,  
and love one another just as he commanded us.  
Those who keep his commandments remain in him, and he in them,  
and the way we know that he remains in us  
is from the Spirit that he gave us.  
The word of the Lord.

#### **Commentary**

The first letter of St. John was written as a response to some people who had broken away from the early Christian community and were opposed to some of the basic teachings about Jesus. This is why the passage opens with references to what is true. Love is not a matter of words. It must also involve real actions. One's thoughts and beliefs (things of the heart) must match what is done on the outside, for "God is greater than our hearts and knows everything."

The reading emphasizes truth. At the heart of the wedding liturgy is the vows, during which the couple will say, "I promise to be true to you." Traditionally this has referred to sexual fidelity, yet it can include a wider range of truth. Couples also need to be true about their finances, their hopes for family, their personal histories, their struggles and addictions, their beliefs about God, and much more. Being true in all things is an imitation of the way Christ Jesus loves us.

The passage describes a love that is sincere. God has commanded us to believe in Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit will help us to know when we have kept God's commands.

***NT 12. God is love.***

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John 4:7-12

Beloved, let us love one another,  
because love is of God;  
everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.  
Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love.  
In this way the love of God was revealed to us:  
God sent his only-begotten Son into the world  
so that we might have life through him.  
In this is love:  
not that we have loved God, but that he loved us  
and sent his Son as expiation for our sins.  
Beloved, if God so loved us,  
we also must love one another.  
No one has ever seen God.  
Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us,  
and his love is brought to perfection in us.  
The word of the Lord.

**Commentary**

This passage dives deep into the Christian mystery and spirituality of love. Love one another, not because of anything we have done or felt or experienced. Rather, we love only because God has loved us first. In other words, love is not dependent upon us or our capabilities. Love depends upon God. God, who is unseen, has shown us what love is like – Love is his Son, Jesus. Most especially, love is his embrace of our sinfulness and the new life that follows in the resurrection.

The readings says nothing specifically about marriage. Yet, marriage has everything to do with love. Couples often believe that love has to do with the feelings and emotions they share with one another. That may be one piece, and this reading can help them see that their love is really gift from God and a participation in God.

The reading will help couples to see that authentically loving their spouse will at some point include a sacrifice, like the love seen in the actions of the Son. Yet loving each another is a way to experience God's abiding presence, and trusting that God will perfect their love for each another.

***NT 13. Blessed are those who have been called to the wedding feast of the Lamb.***

A reading from the Book of Revelation 19:1, 5-9a

I, John, heard what sounded like the loud voice  
of a great multitude in heaven, saying:

“Alleluia!

Salvation, glory, and might belong to our God.”

A voice coming from the throne said:

“Praise our God, all you his servants,  
and you who revere him, small and great.”

Then I heard something like the sound of a great multitude  
or the sound of rushing water or mighty peals of thunder,  
as they said:

“Alleluia!

The Lord has established his reign,  
our God, the almighty.

Let us rejoice and be glad  
and give him glory.

For the wedding day of the Lamb has come,  
his bride has made herself ready.

She was allowed to wear  
a bright, clean linen garment.”

(The linen represents the righteous deeds of the holy ones.)

Then the angel said to me,

“Write this:

Blessed are those who have been called  
to the wedding feast of the Lamb.”

The word of the Lord.

**Commentary**

The book of Revelations is also referred to as apocalypse, which was an ancient writing genre. An apocalypse was when an author would reveal (hence the title Revelations) visions about the future or heaven. This passage is a glimpse into a heavenly wedding feast. Christ is the central figure, and his bride is the entire church, the people of God. The great multitude is the throngs of angels and saints. Reference is made to a bright, clean garment. At a wedding, one would think of the bride's dress. Here, it is the white garment of the saints, and the baptismal garment of those born into the life of Christ through the waters of baptism.

A wedding is referenced twice, yet it is a mystical image of Christ and the Church. It tells us something about the nature of the sacrament of marriage. Christian sacramental marriage intends to show the world the kind of unity that God has with his people. The overabundance of joy in heaven at the union of the faithful with Christ is similar to the joy of a Christian husband and wife.

This reading is mystical in nature and might not easily appeal to the wedding couple and their gathered friends. It could appeal to those who have studied in depth the church's teachings, who have a common love for the Eucharist (a symbol of the banquet feast) and who look forward to a life together on earth and in heaven.



# Gospel Readings

## ***G 1. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.***

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 5:1-12a

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain,  
and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him.

He began to teach them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart,  
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,  
for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you  
and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me.

Rejoice and be glad,  
for your reward will be great in heaven.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

## **Commentary**

On a wedding day, countless people will wish the newlyweds a “happy marriage” or some other expression of happiness. In this much beloved passage known as the Beatitudes, the word “blessed” can also be rendered as “happy,” or “fortunate.” This most recognizable of passages from Matthew’s gospel admits that real happiness is not some fantasy of perpetual glee, but rather it is found in life’s ordinary mix of bitter and sweet. All marriages experience good times and bad. As Christ’s followers, we are called to consider the spiritual dimensions or the blessedness of all life’s activity.

Further making this a worthy option for the marriage celebration is that this passage clearly states the basics for Christian living. It makes no reference to marriage, yet it is the first major discourse in all the Gospels where Jesus describes what life will be like for his followers. There is a parallel between Jesus beginning his teaching ministry and couples beginning their married lives. Similar to this passage, the nuptial blessing in the marriage rite concludes with the hope of eternal fulfillment by praying, “May you...come at last to the kingdom of heaven.” Both stress that marriage has a cosmic dimension, for its fulfillment is in heaven.



***G 2. You are the light of the world.***

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus said to his disciples:

“You are the salt of the earth.

But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned?

It is no longer good for anything

but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

You are the light of the world.

A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden.

Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket;

it is set on a lamp stand,

here it gives light to all in the house.

Just so, your light must shine before others,

that they may see your good deeds

and glorify your heavenly Father.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Commentary**

This passage, like the ones prior and following, is part of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount that takes up three full chapters of Matthew’s gospel. It pertains to Jesus’ foundational teachings for all who seek to follow him. Obviously, a particular reference to marriage is not included here. It does state that Christian living is like a light that illumines a world gone dark from the gloom of sin. The stress on the outward nature of the Christian life is a very useful image for married couples. Love for one another should not be contained to themselves. It should seek to be poured out for others. Like the markings of an upstanding person of faith, the marks of a strong marriage are when others are positively affected and benefit from a couple’s union. Authentic love translates into good deeds and into glory for God.

### ***G 3. A wise man built his house on rock.***

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 7:21, 24-29

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’

will enter the Kingdom of heaven,

but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.

“Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them

will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.

The rain fell, the floods came,

and the winds blew and buffeted the house.

But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock.

And everyone who listens to these words of mine

but does not act on them

will be like a fool who built his house on sand.

The rain fell, the floods came,

and the winds blew and buffeted the house.

And it collapsed and was completely ruined.”

When Jesus finished these words,

the crowds were astonished at his teaching,

for he taught them as one having authority,

and not as their scribes.

The Gospel of the Lord.

### **Commentary**

This passage concludes the extensive opening discourse in Matthew’s gospel regarding an overall picture of discipleship. This is why the longer version of the passage concludes with the note about Jesus finishing these words and the crowd being astonished at his teaching. From the Beatitudes to this point, Jesus has spent much time instructing, and he concludes it all by telling his interested followers that they must put these teachings into actions. The crowd’s reaction is astonishment. Discipleship is as much about doing as it is believing. The disciple is to listen first and then act (vs. 24) upon God’s Word.

All couples getting married have one eye set on the future. So does Matthew. Just like the opening statement in this passage, Matthew frequently portrays Jesus describing the actions a disciple must undertake to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Many wedding couples will be making plans for a new home together. This passage invites consideration of a spiritual and eternal home. Beginning their marriage in the Church is the start point of a solid foundation. Couples who are wise will continue to nourish their relationship with an active faith life and commitment to the parish community.

The short form (below) ends the passage with the strong image of setting one’s house on rock. The image of the house built upon the uncertainty of sand is omitted.

***G 4. What God has united, man must not separate.***

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 19:3-6  
Some Pharisees approached Jesus, and tested him, saying,  
“Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause whatever?”  
He said in reply, “Have you not read that from the beginning  
the Creator made them male and female and said,  
For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother  
and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?  
So they are no longer two, but one flesh.  
Therefore, what God has joined together, man must not separate.”  
The Gospel of the Lord.

**Commentary**

As is commonplace in the Gospels, Jesus does not outright answer “Yes,” or “No” to a zinging question launched by the Pharisees. After all, they were trying to trip him up. Instead of a simple one word response, Jesus poses a question back. The Pharisees were experts on the law, and they should have easily known the passage from Genesis 2 that Jesus quotes. The first five chapters of the Bible, known as the Pentateuch, were the core of Jewish life during Jesus’ lifetime. Jesus does not comment on the lawfulness of divorce, at least not in civil terms. Rather, as he demonstrates a central element of his mission, Jesus raises the stakes to a divine and spiritual reality. He says that “what God has joined” those on earth must not separate. Marriage is a participation in the divine ordering of earthly activities.

This passage is the clearest expression of marriage in the Gospels (a parallel reading is found in Mark 10:2-9). It is the firm foundation for the Church’s teaching on the indissolubility of marriage. When selected for the wedding ritual, it will help to highlight the couple’s vows which are to last all the days of their lives.

***G 5. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it.***

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 22:35-40

One of the Pharisees, a scholar of the law, tested Jesus by asking,  
“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?”

He said to him,

“You shall love the Lord, your God,

with all your heart,

with all your soul,

and with all your mind.

This is the greatest and the first commandment.

The second is like it:

You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Commentary**

The Pharisees are often portrayed in the gospels as micro-managers of the law. There were literally hundreds of laws governing nearly every aspect of life. So, a scholar approaches Jesus and calls him teacher, yet the Pharisee intends to test him. Jesus first quotes Deuteronomy 6:5, the commandment to love God. He doesn't stop there, as he then recites Leviticus 19:18 to love your neighbor. Loving others is like loving God. In fact, loving others is one way to demonstrate our deep love for God. The two are now very closely linked because of this master teaching by Jesus. At baptism, parents are asked if they are ready and willing to accept the responsibilities to raise the child as Christ has taught us, to love God and love one's neighbor. Proclaiming this Gospel at the wedding liturgy will underscore the very basic mission of a Christian—to throw one's entire heart, mind, and soul into loving God, and then to seek to love all others. It will make a subtle connection between baptism as the first sacrament and this sacrament of matrimony. Marriage is not explicitly noted in this passage, yet the connection is natural. Couples with a genuine commitment to improving their community and the well being of others will especially resonate with this passage.

***G 6. They are no longer two, but one flesh.***

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark 10:6-9

Jesus said:

“From the beginning of creation,

God made them male and female.

For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother

and be joined to his wife,

and the two shall become one flesh.

So they are no longer two but one flesh.

Therefore what God has joined together,

no human being must separate.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Commentary**

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, contain many of the same stories, just slightly retold from their own perspective. This short reading from Mark is the same as option #4 by St. Matthew in the wedding readings. Jesus reiterates the Hebrew scripture from Genesis 1:27 and 2:24, noting that God is the source of creation, making men and women who are designed to become one flesh. The Genesis text speaks of the man being joined to his wife, yet Jesus’ final remarks drive the point home that the intent is for both of them to be together inseparably.

This passage reflects the hallmark of any sacrament – they are particular experiences of the Divine. God is doing the joining and no human being must separate it. This final phrase will be heard once again directly after the bride and groom have exchanged their consent and vows when the priest prays, “Let no one separate what God has joined.”

***G 7. Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee.***

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 2:1-11  
There was a wedding in Cana in Galilee,  
and the mother of Jesus was there.  
Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding.  
When the wine ran short,  
the mother of Jesus said to him,  
“They have no wine.”  
And Jesus said to her,  
“Woman, how does your concern affect me?  
My hour has not yet come.”  
His mother said to the servers,  
“Do whatever he tells you.”  
Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings,  
each holding twenty to thirty gallons.  
Jesus told them,  
“Fill the jars with water.”  
So they filled them to the brim.  
Then he told them,  
“Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter.”  
So they took it.  
And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine,  
without knowing where it came from  
(although the servants who had drawn the water knew),  
the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him,  
“Everyone serves good wine first,  
and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one;  
but you have kept the good wine until now.”  
Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee  
and so revealed his glory,  
and his disciples began to believe in him.  
The Gospel of the Lord.

**Commentary**

This passage is traditionally called, “The Wedding Feast at Cana.” Clearly, a wedding is taking place, and not only is Jesus there, but so is his mother, Mary. This makes it attractive to many couples. Yet, more is happening. It’s as if the wedding scene is taking place in the background. In the foreground is a conversation between Mary, the wait staff, and Jesus who reveals a tremendously transformative power.

Embedded in the story is the strength of faith – Mary encourages the servers to do whatever Jesus commands, and it ends with the disciples believing in him. Like the servers, those who demonstrate faith in Christ Jesus will experience good, glorious, and abundant things in this life and especially the next. This text appears early in John’s gospel and is the beginning of Jesus’ many signs. It offers a glimpse of heaven showing the glory of a world to come. The generously overflowing jars of fine wine are symbolic of what Jesus himself offers to us.

Couples who have experienced the transforming power of faith and the abundant presence of Jesus in their lives will enjoy this passage. It encourages them to be like earthen vessels – open to divine transformation whereby their lives are changed to imitate more clearly the ways of Christ.

***G 8. Remain in my love.***

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 15:9-12

Jesus said to his disciples:

“As the Father loves me, so I also love you.

Remain in my love.

If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love,  
just as I have kept my Father’s commandments  
and remain in his love.

“I have told you this so that my joy might be in you  
and your joy might be complete.

This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Commentary**

As family and friends gather for a wedding ceremony one can sense that the church and the environment is oozing with love. There is great excitement and an overabundance of good will and joyful well wishes for the couple. This passage from John’s gospel builds upon the love that is present as it urges the couple and the community to remain in love.

This passage is part of some words of farewell from Jesus to his disciples. He expresses his love for them before his return to the Father. The Father has loved the Son, who in turn loved the people. Now, the people are to keep alive that love by imitating it in their communities. This kind of love is particular. It is the love expressed by the Triune God. “As the Father loves me, so I love you” (v. 9). God the Father loves God the Son boundlessly, without calculation, condition, or discussion, and absolutely freely. The love of the Father to the Son is a pure expression of liberating selflessness.

Couples who are joyously in love, and see God as the source of that love will be attracted to this passage. This love is not an emotion or a feeling which are always passing, but it is a permanent love that wells up from within the fullness of one’s being. Following the command to love in the selfless ways of the Triune God leads to lasting joy. As couples strive to retain and remain in love, they bring joy to God. Committed, mutual, married love completes divine joy.

***G 9. This is my commandment: love one another.***

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 15:12-16

Jesus said to his disciples:

“This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.

No one has greater love than this,  
to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

I no longer call you slaves,  
because a slave does not know what his master is doing.

I have called you friends,  
because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father.

It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you  
and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain,  
so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you.”  
The Gospel of the Lord.

**Commentary**

This passage is a continuation of the farewell words from the previous selection. Jesus is at the Last Supper, and prepared to depart from his disciples. Though absent physically, his presence will remain, particularly in the expressions of selfless loving that imitate his actions. The sacrificial love of married couples is like a mirror of the selfless way that Christ loved his friends. This is why marriage is a sacrament and is a path to salvation, because the two are participating in an action of Christ Jesus.

Many couples will embrace the image of laying down one’s life for the other spouse. It is tough, and it reinforces the fact that spousal love is to endure until death. This is the action of spouses, and it also the central action of real friendship.

The vocation of all Christians is to be drawn into divine friendship. When believers live as Friends of God, their lives will show it (bear fruit) and they will be encouraged to rely upon that friendship in favorable ways for “whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give you” (v.16). The fruit of the married couple will likely include children who will also be formed to selflessly love and follow Christ’s ways. And the family will together call upon God in their need.



***G 10. That they may be brought to perfection as one.***

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 17:20-26  
Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said:  
“I pray not only for my disciples,  
but also for those who will believe in me through their word,  
so that they may all be one,  
as you, Father, are in me and I in you,  
that they also may be in us,  
that the world may believe that you sent me.  
And I have given them the glory you gave me,  
so that they may be one, as we are one,  
I in them and you in me,  
that they may be brought to perfection as one,  
that the world may know that you sent me,  
and that you loved them even as you loved me.  
Father, they are your gift to me.  
I wish that where I am they also may be with me,  
that they may see my glory that you gave me,  
because you loved me before the foundation of the world.  
Righteous Father, the world also does not know you,  
but I know you, and they know that you sent me.  
I made known to them your name and I will make it known,  
that the love with which you loved me  
may be in them and I in them.”  
The Gospel of the Lord.

**Commentary**

Just before Jesus enters into his passion and death, he prays this prayer for love and unity. He looks up into heaven and desires that the glory of heaven will be made known on earth. His prayer draws upon the profound unity of the Trinity, where God the Father perfectly and fully loves God the Son and they dwell in each other's love.

The Trinity has at times, been described in our tradition this way: The three persons of the Godhead are like a Lover, the Beloved, and the Love between them – corresponding to God the Father, who loves God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit who is the love shared between them. The seamless unity of the Father and Son (the Lover and the Beloved), is a metaphor for the unity that is desired through a sacramental marriage.

As Jesus mystically envisions heavenly glory, he desires that all in his flock are to share heaven with him. Married couples embark on a journey that is to culminate in heaven. They walk alongside each another in their earthly lives, and an indispensable part of life include a spiritual life and an eternal dimension.

This passage might be favored by couples who desire an intense bond, including a strong spiritual unity that can only come from relying upon the Holy Spirit in their relationship. Also, those who have struggled to reconcile differences between themselves, their families, or within their community of faith, might find this a useful passage.

Jesus desires the same unity for them, the fullness of which will not be realized until eternity breaks through. Unless the homilist is drawing from the phrase, “before the foundation of the world” little will be lost using the shorter form (below). It retains the Trinitarian image of unity, and preserves the vision that the community of believers is to be perfectly one.

# The Wedding Ceremony

## Statement of Intent:

Presider: My dear friends, you have come together in this church so that the Lord may seal and strengthen your love in the presence of the Church's minister and this community. Christ abundantly blesses this love. He has already consecrated you in baptism and now he enriches and strengthens you by a special sacrament so that you may assume the duties of marriage in mutual and lasting fidelity. And so, in the presence of the Church, I ask you to state your intentions. -

(Name) and (name), have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage?

Groom and Bride Respond: I have...

Will you honor each other as man and wife for the rest of your lives?

Groom and Bride Respond: I will...

Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?

Groom and Bride Respond: I will...

## The Vows:

**Priest (or deacon):** Since it is your intention to enter into marriage, join your right hands, and declare your consent before God and his Church.

### Vows, Option 1

**Groom:** I, (name), take you, (name), to be my wife. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.

**Bride:** I, (name), take you, (name), to be my husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.

*Through Questions:*

**Priest:** (Name), do you take (name) to be your wife? Do you promise to be true to her in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love her and honor her all the days of your life?

**Groom:** I do.

**Priest:** (Name), do you take (name) to be your husband? Do you promise to be true to him in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love him and honor him all the days of your life?

**Bride:** I do.

### Vows, Option 2

In the United States, Catholic wedding vows may also take the following form:

**Groom:** I, (name), take you, (name), for my lawful wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.

**Bride:** I, (name), take you, (name), for my lawful husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.

*Through Questions:*

**Priest:** (Name), do you take (name) for your lawful wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do you part? **Groom:** I do.

**Priest:** (Name), do you take (name) for your lawful husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do you part? **Bride:** I do.

**Priest (or deacon):** You have declared your consent before the Church. May the Lord in his goodness strengthen your consent and fill you both with his blessings.

What God has joined, men must not divide.

*All Respond: Amen.*



## **Blessing of Rings**

### ***Option 1***

May the Lord bless these rings  
which you give to each other  
as the sign of your love and fidelity.

*R.:* Amen.

### ***Option 2***

Lord, bless these rings  
which we bless in your name.  
Grant that those who wear them  
may always have a deep faith in each other.  
May they do your will  
and always live together  
in peace, good will, and love.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

*R.:* Amen.

### ***Option 3***

Lord, bless and consecrate *(Name)* and *(Name)*  
in their love for each other.  
May these rings be a symbol of true faith in each other,  
and always remind them of their love.  
Through Christ our Lord.

*R.:* Amen.

**Groom** (placing the wedding ring on his wife's ring finger): *(Name)*, take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity.  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Bride** (placing the wedding ring on her husband's ring finger): *(Name)*, take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

*For Weddings within Sunday Mass or a Solemnity Mass, the Recitation of the Creed follows.*



## Intercessory Prayers of the Faithful

### For a Wedding

*You are free to choose among the following, numbered based on themes. You are also free to compose your own intercessions, using the following as a model. Please strive to make the petitions sound like the same person wrote them, instead of piecing them together which might sound awkward.*

Setting 1:

1a. For N. and N., that they grow in love and loyalty to each other – we pray to the Lord...

1b. For N. and N. that their love and loyalty towards each other be strengthened and deepened in the years ahead – we pray to the Lord...

1c. For N. and N., that their faith in God and their devotion to one another enable them to overcome whatever trials and troubles they may experience in the years ahead – we pray to the Lord...

2a. For the family and friends of N. and N., that they continue to cherish and support this couple by their prayers and example – we pray to the Lord...

2b. For the parents, relatives and friends of N. and N., that they continue to encourage and support this couple – we pray to the Lord...

3a. For all married couples here today, that they renew their commitment to one another – we pray to the Lord...

3b. For all married couples, that they draw their inspiration from God's loving presence in their hearts and their homes – we pray to the Lord...

4. For couples having marital problems, that they seek and receive the help they need to solve their difficulties – we pray to the Lord...

5. For all of us, that we deepen our faith and trust in our God who loves us without end – we pray to the Lord...

6. For the victims of domestic violence, that they receive the help and the healing they need – we pray to the Lord...

7a. For all the faithful departed, that they enjoy the wedding feast of heaven – we pray to the Lord...

7b. For those who have died, especially \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, that they rejoice at the eternal wedding banquet of God's kingdom – we pray to the Lord...

Intercessions, Setting 2

For leaders of Church and state

for heads of institutions,  
for heads of homes and households. . . that they will lead us and guide us  
in the search for God and the good life, in the search for peace and joy,  
in the search for love among us. Let us pray to the Lord.

For all married people:

for those who married yesterday,  
for the new couple N. and N., married today,  
for those who will marry tomorrow. . . that they may savor  
the joy of being together,  
warm love, and children,  
a long life, wine, and friends,  
and a new day, every day  
let us pray to the Lord.

For all young single people

who look forward to a vocation  
full of life and full of love  
let us pray to the Lord.

For the lonely old and the lonely young,

for the hungry rich  
and the hungry poor,  
for the sick in body, mind, and spirit, for the weakness in all of us  
let us pray to the Lord.

For our relatives and friends

who walk with us on life's journey  
and for those who have gone before us to the other side of life.  
For the fulfillment of all their  
unfulfilled desires  
let us pray to the Lord.

#### Intercessions, Setting 3

1. For Pope N. , our Bishop N. and all those who lead the Church on earth, we pray to the Lord. R. Lord, hear our prayer.
2. For N. and N. who are united in Matrimony this day, that God may help them to live as true partners in life and love, we pray to the Lord. R. Lord, hear our prayer.
3. For all married couples and families, that the Lord may guide and protect them in all moments of life, we pray to the Lord. R. Lord, hear our prayer.
4. For the sick and suffering, that we may be a sign of God's compassion to them, we pray to the Lord. R. Lord, hear our prayer.
5. For those who have died, and especially for the deceased members of the families and friends of the bride and the groom ( in particular for,...), we pray to the Lord. R. Lord, hear our prayer.

#### Intercessions, Setting 4

1. For all the leaders of God's Holy Church, we pray to the Lord. R. Lord, bless your people.
2. For the newly married couple, N. and N. , and for all couples united in Matrimony, we pray to the Lord. R. Lord, bless your people.
3. For a greater respect for human life, at all stages of its development, from conception until natural death, we pray to the Lord. R. Lord, bless your people.
4. For an increase in true devotion and in living the call to love one another as Christ has loved us, we pray to the Lord. R. Lord, bless your people.
5. For those who are ill, lonely, frightened, or in trouble, that God may give them comfort by our lives, we pray to the Lord. R. Lord, bless your people.
6. For those who have died, and especially for the deceased loved ones of the bride and the groom, we pray to the Lord. R. Lord, bless your people.

#### Intercessions, Setting 5

1. For our Holy Father on earth, the Pope, all the bishops and the clergy everywhere that they may lead us to deeper faith in God and a stronger love for others, let us pray to the Lord.
2. For our president and all leaders of government that they may be effective in achieving peace and eliminating poverty, let us pray to the Lord.
3. For married persons that they may continue to give, be able to forgive, and find happiness deepen with the passing of each day, let us pray to the Lord.
4. For N. and N., now beginning their life together, that they may have divine assistance at every moment, the constant support of friends, the rich blessing of children, a warm love reaching out to others, and good health until a ripe old age, let us pray to the Lord.
5. For those who are sick, lonely, discouraged, or oppressed that they may be strengthened by God's help and aided by their friends, let us pray to the Lord.
6. For those who have died, especially the relatives and friends of N. and N. and of all present for this wedding, that they may enjoy perfect happiness and total fulfillment in eternal life, let us pray to the Lord.





## Nuptial Blessing:

The New Roman Missal has revised the Nuptial Blessings. In the Celebration of Marriage without Mass, the nuptial Blessing occurs after the Intercessions and before the “Lord’s Prayer”

### Nuptial Blessing Option A (RM 1181-1182)

Dear brothers and sisters,  
let us humbly pray to the Lord  
that on these his servants, now married in Christ,  
he may mercifully pour out  
the blessing of his grace  
and make of one heart in love  
(by the sacrament of Christ’s Body and Blood)  
those he has joined by a holy covenant.

*All pray in silence for a while.*

O God, who by your mighty power  
created all things out of nothing,  
and, when you had set in place  
the beginnings of the universe,  
formed man and woman in your own image,  
making the woman an inseparable helpmate to the man,  
that they might no longer be two, but one flesh,  
and taught that what you were pleased to make one  
must never be divided;  
O God, who consecrated the bond of marriage  
by so great a mystery  
that in the wedding covenant you foreshadowed  
the sacrament of Christ and his Church;  
O God, by whom woman is joined to man  
and the companionship they had in the beginning  
is endowed with the one blessing  
not forfeited by original sin  
nor washed away by the flood.  
look now with favor on these your servants,  
joined together in marriage,  
who ask to be strengthened by your blessing.  
send down on them the grace of the Holy Spirit  
and pour your love into their hearts,  
that they may remain faithful in the marriage covenant.  
May the grace of love and peace  
abide in your daughter N.,  
and let her always follow the example of those holy women  
whose praises are sung in the scriptures.  
may her husband entrust his heart to her,  
so that, acknowledging her as his equal  
and his joint heir to the life of grace,  
he may show her due honor  
and cherish her always  
with the love that Christ has for his Church.  
And now, Lord, we implore you:  
may these your servants  
hold fast to the faith and keep your commandments;  
made one in the flesh,  
may they be blameless in all they do;  
and with the strength that comes from the Gospel,  
may they bear true witness to Christ before all;  
(may they be blessed with children,  
and prove themselves virtuous parents,

who live to see their children's children).  
And grant that,  
reaching at last together the fullness of years  
for which they hope,  
they may come to the life of the blessed  
in the Kingdom of heaven.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
R. Amen.

## Nuptial Blessing Option B (RM 1186-1187)

Let us pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,  
who come to the altar as they begin their married life,  
that (partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ)  
they may always be bound together by love for one another.

*All pray in silence for a while.*

Holy Father,  
who formed man in your own image,  
male and female you created them,  
so that as husband and wife, united in body and heart,  
they might fulfill their calling in the world;  
O God, who, to reveal the great design you formed in your love,  
willed that the love of spouses for each other  
should foreshadow the covenant you graciously made with your people,  
so that, by fulfillment of the sacramental sign,  
the mystical marriage of Christ with his Church  
might become manifest  
in the union of husband and wife among your faithful;  
Graciously stretch out your right hand  
over these your servants (n. and n.), we pray,  
and pour into their hearts the power of the Holy Spirit.  
Grant, O Lord,  
that, as they enter upon this sacramental union,  
they may share with one another the gifts of your love  
and, by being for each other a sign of your presence,  
become one heart and one mind.  
May they also sustain, O Lord, by their deeds  
the home they are forming  
(and prepare their children  
to become members of your heavenly household  
by raising them in the way of the Gospel).  
Graciously crown with your blessings your daughter n.,  
so that, by being a good wife (and mother),  
she may bring warmth to her home with a love that is pure  
and adorn it with welcoming graciousness.  
Bestow a heavenly blessing also, O Lord,  
on n., your servant,  
that he may be a worthy, good and  
faithful husband (and a provident father).  
Grant, holy Father, that, desiring to approach your table  
as a couple joined in marriage in your presence,  
they may one day have the joy  
of taking part in your great banquet in heaven.  
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.



### **Nuptial Blessing Option C (RM 1192-1193)**

Let us humbly invoke by our prayers, dear brothers and sisters,  
God's blessing upon this bride and groom,  
that in his kindness he may favor with his help  
those on whom he has bestowed the sacrament of matrimony.

*All pray in silence for a while.*

Holy Father, maker of the whole world,  
who created man and woman in your own image  
and willed that their union be crowned with your blessing,  
we humbly beseech you for these your servants,  
who are joined today in the sacrament of matrimony.  
May your abundant blessing, Lord,  
come down upon this bride, n.,  
and upon n., her companion for life,  
and may the power of your Holy Spirit  
set their hearts aflame from on high,  
so that, living out together the gift of matrimony,  
they may (adorn their family with children  
and) enrich the Church.

In happiness may they praise you, O Lord,  
in sorrow may they seek you out;  
may they have the joy of your presence  
to assist them in their toil,  
and know that you are near  
to comfort them in their need;  
let them pray to you in the holy assembly  
and bear witness to you in the world,  
and after a happy old age,  
together with the circle of friends that surrounds them,  
may they come to the Kingdom of heaven.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
R. Amen.



**Solemn Blessing at the Wedding without Mass A**

May God the eternal Father  
keep you of one heart in love for one another,  
that the peace of Christ may dwell in you  
and abide always in your home.

R. Amen.

May you be blessed in your children,  
have solace in your friends  
and enjoy true peace with everyone.

R. Amen.

May you be witnesses in the world to God's charity,  
so that the afflicted and needy who have known your kindness  
may one day receive you thankfully  
into the eternal dwelling of God.

R. Amen.

And may Almighty God bless all of you, who are gathered here,  
the Father, and the Son, •  
and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

**Solemn Blessing at the Wedding without Mass B**

May God the all-powerful Father grant you his joy  
and bless you in your children.

R. Amen.

May the only Begotten Son of God  
stand by you with compassion in good times and in bad.

R. Amen.

May the Holy Spirit of God  
always pour forth his love into your hearts.

R. Amen.

And may almighty God bless all of you, who are gathered here,  
the Father, and the Son,  
and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

**Solemn Blessing at the Wedding without Mass C**

May the Lord Jesus,  
who graced the marriage at Cana by his presence,  
bless you and your loved ones.

R. Amen.

May he, who loved the Church to the end,  
unceasingly pour his love into your hearts.

R. Amen.

May the Lord grant  
that, bearing witness to faith in his Resurrection,  
you may await with joy the blessed hope to come.

R. Amen.

And may almighty God bless all of you, who are gathered here,  
the Father, and the Son, •  
and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.





## TO WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHERS

### GUIDELINES

You have been invited to record these precious moments of celebration that mark the beginning of a marriage journey. The images you provide will enable family members who are not able to attend to share this sacred event. Your photographs will be a reference to our couple many times during their marriage as they struggle with life, take time out to remember and tell the story of their love to their children. You are therefore a part of this sacred liturgy. We ask you to enter the ceremony, not just with your camera but also with your prayerful presence.

We want you to help us with the liturgy by being as unobtrusive as possible. We realize it takes knowledge, skill and sensitivity to take photographs that are artistic and professional. We offer the following suggestions to help us pray without distractions.

- Please respect the sanctuary space - all clutter kept to a minimum and picked up after the photographic session.
- Please end the formal photographs at least 1/2 hour before the wedding begins.
- Please check with the Priest or presider as to the best and permitted locations for photographing during the Liturgy.
- Please do not use flash lighting during the liturgy as it destroys the focus and mood of the liturgy.
- Any movements should be discreet and virtually unnoticed. Never block the view of any member of the congregation.
- When the procession begins, do not place yourself in the aisle-way.
- Check with the Priest if you are not familiar with the theme or flow of a Catholic liturgy. He will cue you through the program.
- You may take photographs on the church grounds as well.
- Please refrain from taking indiscreet pictures on church property.
- If you wish to have a photo of the signing of the marriage license, you must inform the celebrant **before** the wedding to find the time and place of the signing (it is not done during the liturgy itself).

Again, we realize your presence is very important to our couple and we wish to work with you to make our liturgy and photograph album memorable.



# **Choosing Wedding Music**

## **Planning Your Catholic Wedding**

The Catholic Church calls music a “necessary” part of the liturgy because it helps the assembly pray together more vibrantly. If it is done well, this special form of prayer unites the assembly together in ‘one voice’. The Church keeps no official list of approved wedding music, but if you follow the guidelines below and work with your parish music ministers to choose music that is prayerful, beautiful and accessible, you will have active participation of the assembly who can express their love and support for you and your spouse.

## **Work with your Parish Music Ministers**

Your music minister will be able to direct you to:

- A range of possibilities for wedding music
- Music widely used in the parish issued by Catholic music sources such as OCP publications and GIA publications - *Ritual Song Hymnal* at St. Peter’s Church
- Music ministers who accompany and sing
- Help you choose selections that are acceptable

## **Parish Musicians**

Director of Music:

Barbara Frank

Cell Phone: 507-779-4261

E:mail:Barbara.Frank@churchofstpeter.org

Organists:

- Vonnie Elker: Cell Phone: 507-327-3612
- Paul McDaniel: Home Phone: 507-934-1926
- Kim Braunger: Home Phone: 507-931-0816

Cantor/Song Leaders:

- Sue Serbus: Home Phone: 507-931-6250
- Barb Rodning: Home Phone: 507-931-6291
- Bill Johnson: Home Phone: 507-934-6524
- Barbara Frank: Home Phone: 507-232-4013

## **Three Criteria for choosing Wedding Music**

Is it prayerful?

- The purpose of any Catholic wedding liturgy is to give glory to God and to sanctify (make holy) the worshippers. Your music should help the assembly to pray and to give thanks to God for your marriage. This will also be reflected in the ‘March music’; some of the classic marches from secular operas are often not permitted. There are numerous other choices.

Is it accessible?

- Will the assembly be able to sing along? In a wedding liturgy those who attend are called upon to actively participate in the prayer of the church; including its sung prayer. Doing

so is one of the most powerful ways friends and family can express their love and support for the wedding couple.

Is it beautiful?

- Beauty is a window into the divine (Catechism #32), so it is not surprising the music in Catholic worship is to be beautiful. Though this is somewhat subjective, depending upon local culture and personal tastes, your choices of music may be depend more upon the skill of the musicians who sing or play it. A hymn that seemed ho-hum the first time you heard it in church might have great potential in the right hands or voice.

### **Decide when music will be used in the wedding liturgy**

- Strictly speaking, music isn't necessary for a valid Catholic wedding, but it is strongly encouraged. You have some latitude in regards to how much music and what music to choose for prelude and postlude, but a psalm and gospel acclamation are required for weddings with music. Processional music is instrumental in nature. Attached is a list of suggestions from the Ritual song Hymnal. At a planning session with the music minister, you will be able to hear the titles. It is possible to hear most music using the 'you tube' feature on your electronic devices or using music publisher websites.

With timely planning, selection of music and choosing musicians that are familiar with Catholic liturgy and liturgical music, your wedding liturgy will be a reflection of your faith as you give glory to God with your family and friends on your special day.

### **Preludes& Processionals**

<b>Instrumental Music</b>	
<b>Bach</b>	Air from Suite -3 in D (on G-string) Arioso Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring
<b>Handel</b>	Largo, from 'Xerxes' Royal Fireworks Music: Overture La Rejouissance Water Music Suite: Hornpipe and Air
<b>J. Clarke</b>	Prince of Denmark's Trumpet voluntary
<b>Charpentier</b>	Trumpet tune from 'Te Deum'
<b>Pachelbel</b>	Canon in D
<b>W. Walton</b>	Crown Imperial
<b>Paul Manz</b>	God of Grace and God of Glory
<b>C. Gounod</b>	Marche Pontificale
<b>G. Young</b>	Prelude in Classic Style
<b>B. Marcello</b>	Psalm XIX
<b>A. Campra</b>	Rigaudon
<b>J. Mouret</b>	Rondeau from 'Simphonies di Fanfare'
<b>C Widor</b>	Toccata from the Fifth Organ Symphony
<b>J. Stanley</b>	Trumpet Tune
<b>H. Purcell</b>	Trumpet Tunes

<b>Page #</b>	<b>Ritual Song Hymnal</b>	<b>Hymns for:</b>
774	Blest Are They	Communion
928	Eat This Bread	Communion
802	Here I am, Lord	Communion
641	I have Loved You	Communion
929	Let us Be Bread	Communion
920	Life-giving Bread, Saving Cup	Communion
743	Love Divine, All Loves Excelling	Communion
933	Now in this Banquet	Communion
740	On Eagles Wings	Communion
915	One Bread, One Body	Communion
909	Pan de Vida	Communion
910	Take And Eat	Communion
840	We are Many Parts	Communion
815	We have Been Told	Communion

<b>Page #</b>	<b>Ritual Song Hymnal</b>	<b>Hymns for:</b>
670	All creatures of Our God	Entrance, gifts, recessional
772	Bring Forth the Kingdom	Entrance, gifts, recessional
850	Gather Us In	Entrance, gifts, recessional
696	Glory and Praise to Our God	Entrance, gifts, recessional
669	Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You	Entrance, gifts, recessional
946	Love is the Sunlight	Entrance, gifts, recessional
859	Morning Has Broken	Entrance, gifts, recessional
700	Now Thank We all Our God	Entrance, gifts, recessional
695	Praise to the Lord, Thee almighty	Entrance, gifts, recessional
918	Seed Scattered and Sown	Entrance, gifts, recessional
686	Sing a New Song	Entrance, gifts, recessional
677	Sing a New Song to the Lord	Entrance, gifts, recessional
590	Sing to the Mountains	Entrance, gifts, recessional
4	This Day God Gives Me	Entrance, gifts, recessional
709	We Gather Together	Entrance, gifts, recessional
942	When Love is Found	Entrance, gifts, recessional
659	You Are the Voice	Entrance, gifts, recessional

### **Psalms**

<b>Page #</b>	<b>Ritual Song Hymnal</b>	<b>Composer:</b>
53	Psalm 25: To You, O Lord	Haugen
66	Psalm 33: The Earth is full of the Goodness of God	Haugen
70	Psalm 34: Taste and See	Haugen
72	Psalm 34: Taste and See	Dean
118	Psalm 89: Forever I will sing	Haugen
143	Psalm 103: the Lord is Kind and Merciful	Haugen
158	Psalm 118: This is the Day (Haugen)	Haugen
164	Psalm 121: Our help comes from the Lord	Joncas
173	Psalm 128: Blest Are Those Who Love You	Haugen
193	Psalm 145: I will Praise Your Name	Haas

## **Gospel and Eucharistic Acclamations**

### **Order of Mass Booklet**

<b><u>Page #</u></b>	<b><u>Ritual Song Hymnal</u></b>	<b><u>Composer:</u></b>
p. 19	Mass of Creation	Haugen
p. 63	Mass of Light	Haas
p. 52	Mass of Remembrance	HaUen
booklet	Mass of Wisdom	Janco
p. 395	Celtic Alleluia	O'Carroll/Walker

### **Vocal Solo Collections**

Choices for Prelude Music or Gifts

<b><u>Publisher</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Composer</u></b>
Hope	Folk Songs for Weddings	Several
Galaxy	Five Mystical Song	Vaugh-Williams
AFP	Three solos for medium voice	Several
GSCH	Biblical Songs	Dvorak
Hal Leonard	Contemporary Christian	Several
Lillenas	Ancient of Days	Arr. Fettke
Lillenas	Mighty is Our God	Arr. Fettke

Other Selections as agreed upon by Music Ministers and Pastor or celebrant.

## Wedding Checklist

### Preparation starting no later than 6 months before

- ☐ Pray with/for your future spouse
- ☐ Confirm the date of the wedding with Father and the parish
- ☐ Take and discuss the FOCCUS or PMI
- ☐ Register and attend the required retreat weekend
- ☐ Request/receive/turn in Baptismal Certificates
- ☐ Fill out the Diocesan Forms with Father
- ☐ Select/discuss the prayers/readings with celebrant
- ☐ Set your budget for the banquet/etc.
- ☐ Purchase the rings
- ☐ Send out your invitations about six weeks before the wedding
- ☐ Order any necessary flowers/decorations
- ☐ Discuss meal options with your caterer/banquet hall
- ☐ Discuss music with Father/musicians
- ☐ Ask for Lector(s), Servers and EMHC if needed
- ☐ Create worship aid/program for the Wedding, or give to parish secretary for preparation
- ☐ Confirm with the Pastor the time and date for the practice and notify parents / wedding party / ushers / lectors / servers / musicians
- ☐ Set time and location of the Groom's Supper
- ☐ Apply for the marriage license (no later than a week before)
- ☐ Give marriage license to the parish secretary as soon as possible

### The week/evening before the wedding:

- ☐ Pray with/for your future spouse
- ☐ Go to Reconciliation
- ☐ Come to the Practice early and ready for last minute questions
- ☐ Give the priest witnessing the vows your marriage license, if you haven't already
- ☐ Give to the Priest the stipend, unless already arranged
- ☐ Make sure not to drink too much alcohol the night before

### The Wedding day:

- ☐ Pray for your spouse and prepare for the day!
- ☐ Enjoy the liturgy, listen and participate in it
- ☐ Greet your guests. Know that you cannot talk long with all of them, and they should expect that you have others to greet.
- ☐ Do not disappear for long periods of time. Your guests want to see you at the reception at the time you told them to be there. Special consideration will be made for special stops (such as to visit a grandparent not able to attend), but be brief.
- ☐ Stay together at the reception as much as possible.

### After the Wedding:

- ☐ Keep praying with your spouse
- ☐ Open the gifts with joy
- ☐ Send Thank you notes
- ☐ Enjoy Life!!!