

Planning your Wedding

Thoughtful, prayerful planning and participation in your Catholic wedding will bring many blessings to your married life.

The Wedding Liturgy

LITURGICAL CELEBRATION OF YOUR MARRIAGE

The celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage, which is rooted in the Church's regular worship life, is not a private family function, nor is it merely a social affair or a personal expression of your love for one another. Rather, it is an action of the entire Church in whose presence you commit yourselves to one another. Because the Sacrament of Marriage is worship, it is principally congregational. And because it is congregational, every effort should be made to enable the assembly to participate in a full and active manner. The liturgy is neither a show nor a performance and it is not enhanced by any design that creates passive observers. Everyone present should be encouraged to participate by being able to hear, see, speak, sing and pray.

We kindly ask you to take the following into consideration in order to keep the dignity and décor of a sacred place such as our Church.

- Please refrain from engaging in a conversation within the Church main nave.
- Pictures may be taken during the celebration. We kindly ask the photographer to keep the dignity and sacredness of the Church by not moving constantly or running during the ceremony. Photographers are not allowed to stand on the presbytery.
- Those people chosen to be lectors during the ceremony, family members or friends must be baptized Catholics.

WEDDING CEREMONY WITH NUPTIAL MASS

After meeting and consulting with the priest who will preside at the wedding, the marriage could be celebrated in the context of a Nuptial Mass (with Communion) or a Marriage Ceremony (without Communion). The determining criteria will center on the religious background of the bride and groom, and which form of liturgy best accommodates the assembled guests to celebrate their unity. Our church is fully committed to making all our guests feel welcome as brothers and sisters in Christ, joining in the prayer of this joyous occasion. At the same time, it would be a disservice to pretend as though differences and divisions within our Christian faith family and with other traditions do not exist.

Specific concerns you should ask yourself:

- Are those attending all part of the Catholic Faith, or will there be many other Christian or non-Christian faiths represented?

- Will the celebration of Mass with communion prohibit a significant number of your family and guests from feeling fully welcome and participating? While we do all we can to overcome differences and divisions, we choose instead to focus on what unites us at this moment of joy, welcoming all to your celebration of unity. With this in mind, we recommend the following formats for your liturgical service:

CEREMONY WITH MASS

- For a Catholic marrying another Catholic;
- Both families are significantly practicing Catholics

CEREMONY WITHOUT MASS

- For a Catholic marrying a Non-Catholic Christian
- For a Catholic marrying a person of another Faith Tradition

WEDDING PARTY

• Best Man and Maid/Matron of Honor

These individuals are very special persons in your life, and by custom they accomplish two things:

1. They witness to the words of fidelity and love you publicly exchange with each other;
2. They are to support and encourage you in the practice of the faith you are publicly professing.

• Children in the Wedding Party

We understand the desire of couples who wish to include very young members of their families in the wedding as flower girls or ring bearers. We simply ask you kindly to consider carefully the age of any children you might wish to include in your wedding party. Really young children can sometimes be quite overwhelmed by the triumph of the wedding ceremony, especially the opening procession. We recommend thoughtful planning in this regard. Children should be old enough to have a sense of the event and the importance and execution of the procession. Children must be able to walk the length of the aisle.

READINGS AND LITURGICAL PRAYERS

You will be provided with a resource which contains those scripture readings most appropriate for use at weddings. In consultation with the pastoral minister helping you plan your wedding, you will select usually three passages from scripture. Non-scriptural readings or poems are never permitted in place of the scriptures. Weddings held in a Catholic Church are celebrated according to the worship books of the Roman Catholic Church: the Roman Missal, the Lectionary, and the Rite of Marriage. Keep in mind this is a sacrament of the Catholic Church and the bride and groom may not read their own vows, privately written. In order for the Sacrament of Marriage to be valid, the vows as prescribed in the Rite of Marriage must be used.

You can choose Catholic friends or family members for different roles in the ceremony, such as readers and those who assist with the Eucharistic gifts. Making these choices

with your future spouse and with the priest or deacon can help you to become more deeply involved in your celebration of your marriage.

OPTIONS

• The Unity Candle

The unity candle has emerged in contemporary times as an additional symbolic expression of the couple's vow as a "symbol of unity" as members of two families come together for a shared purpose of devotion to the bride and groom as they become one family. This is one among several wedding customs that are not officially part of the Church's liturgical ritual. While the unity candle may be used, you may find it helpful to discuss whether or not you need to include the unity candle in your Marriage Ceremony based on the following considerations:

• Flowers to the Blessed Virgin Mary

This has been a custom retained by various Catholic cultures. You may choose to include this ritual in your ceremony. Please consult with the pastoral minister helping you plan your wedding if this is an option you wish to include in the ceremony.

• Cultural Wedding Traditions

Presenting the "*arras*", "*lazo*" to the bride and groom are a great gift of certain cultures. In celebrating our diversity, we recognize their value as an integral part of your heritage. However, in the spirit of good order and noble simplicity which has always characterized the Roman Rite, we ask that the couple carefully consider the number of primary and secondary sponsors they invite to participate in the liturgy if presenting these cultural gifts is included in the ceremony.

WEDDING PROGRAMS

One of the things that will help your guests to participate and worship well together is a nicely designed, printed program. If you wish to have a printed program for your wedding, this guide can be of assistance to you. Listed on the left-hand margins is an example of those parts of the liturgy that should be printed in the program. Items printed in *italics* indicate variables that you should list in the finished product. Optional items are given in brackets. The music minister can help provide you with all of the musical variables (titles, composers and music texts) once your musical selections have been approved. Finalized wedding programs need to be submitted to the music and liturgy staff prior to printing.

Thoughtful, prayerful planning and participation in your Catholic wedding ceremony is a decision that will bring many blessings to your married life long after you've forgotten all the other decisions you made about flowers, photos, and table decorations.

PROGRAM FOR WEDDING CEREMONY WITH MASS

PRELUDE

[SEATING OF THE MOTHERS]

Music Title

Composer

INTRODUCTORY RITE

PROCESSIONAL
[OPENING HYMN]
GREETING
PENITENTIAL RITE
OPENING PRAYER

Music Title
Music Title

Composer
Hymn Number

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING
RESPONSORIAL PSALM
SECOND READING
GOSPEL ACCLAMATION
GOSPEL
HOMILY

Text of Psalm Refrain

Scripture Reference
Psalm Number
Scripture Reference

Alleluia*

Scripture Reference

RITE OF MARRIAGE

EXCHANGE OF VOWS
BLESSING AND EXCHANGE OF RINGS
[UNITY CANDLE] [LAZO, ARRAS]
PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

OFFERTORY
Presentation of Gifts
EUCHARISTIC PRAYER
ACCLAMATIONS
LORD'S PRAYER
NUPTIAL BLESSING
SIGN OF PEACE
LAMB OF GOD
COMMUNION
PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Music Title

Music Title

CONCLUDING RITE

[FLOWERS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN]
FINAL BLESSING
DISMISSAL
RECESSIONAL

Music Title

Music Title

Composer

PROGRAM FOR WEDDING CEREMONY WITHOUT MASS

PRELUDE
[SEATING OF THE MOTHERS]

Music Title

Composer

INTRODUCTORY RITE

PROCESSIONAL GREETING	<i>Music Title</i>	<i>Composer</i>
[OPENING HYMN] OPENING PRAYER	<i>Music Title</i>	<i>Composer</i>

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING		<i>Scripture Reference</i>
REPONSORIAL PSALM	<i>Text of Psalm Refrain</i>	<i>Psalm Number</i>
SECOND READING		<i>Scripture Reference</i>
GOSPEL ACCLAMATION	Alleluia*	
GOSPEL HOMILY		<i>Scripture Reference</i>

RITE OF MARRIAGE

EXCHANGE OF VOWS
BLESSING AND EXCHANGE OF RINGS
[LIGHTING OF UNITY CANDLE] [PRESENTATION OF LAZO, ARRAS]
PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL
LORD'S PRAYER
NUPTIAL BLESSING

CONCLUDING RITE

[FLOWERS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN]	<i>Music Title</i>	
FINAL BLESSING AND DISMISSAL		
RECESSIONAL	<i>Music Title</i>	<i>Composer</i>

**Please note that during the season of Lent, alleluias are not sung in the church's liturgies. During Lent, the gospel acclamation will be "Glory to you, O Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ."*