

Wedding Planning Sheet

The Celebration of Matrimony within Mass

St. Joseph (Westphalia) and St. Anthony of Padua (Folk)
last revised August, 2023

“God, who has called the couple to Marriage, continues to call them to Marriage. Those who marry in Christ are able, with faith in the Word of God, to celebrate fruitfully the mystery of the union of Christ and the Church, to live it rightly, and to bear witness to it publicly before all.” (Order of Celebrating Matrimony, no. 11)

Names of altar servers (at least 2): _____

Will incense be used? _____

The Introductory Rites

The *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* (2016) offers two forms for the entrance. The couple should choose one of these two forms and should write out the order of the wedding party (within the allowable options) for the entrance. This should be done before the rehearsal.

The *Diocesan Wedding Policy*, no. 7 indicates: “The entrance procession should not include children being pulled in a wagon; if a child is not old enough to walk unassisted, in an orderly fashion that avoids distraction, they should be carried by another.”

The First Form of the Entrance

If there is seating of grandparents/parents, this takes place first. (*Diocesan Wedding Policy*, no. 8)

The priest goes with the servers to the church entrance. There he greets the wedding party. Then there is a procession to the altar. The servers (with cross and candles) go first, followed by the priest, followed by the wedding party (including bridesmaids and groomsmen), followed by the couple using one of the following options (*Diocesan Wedding Policy*, no. 8):

- a) groom with parents; bride with parents; or,
- b) groom, then bride (with father); or
- b) bride and groom together

The Second Form of the Entrance

The priest goes with the servers to the place prepared for the couple in front of the altar and waits for the bridal party to arrive. The couple decides how to arrange the entrance of the wedding party and themselves. Seating of grandparents/parents may take place at any time.

When the couple have arrived at their place before the altar, the priest greets them. Then the Entrance Chant (hymn) is sung, during which the priest reverences the altar and then goes to his chair.

Which form of the entrance will be used?

First Form _____ **Second Form** _____

The *Diocesan Wedding Policy*, no. 5 indicates: “All music in the church building is to be sacred music, including preludes; no ballads, pop, country, etc.”

Prelude Music (no more than 15 minutes before the wedding start time) (optional)

- _____
- _____
- _____

The *Diocesan Wedding Policy*, no. 4 indicates: “An entrance chant (hymn, song, refrain) is prescribed; this may take place immediately before, during or after the wedding party’s procession.”

Instrumental Music for the Wedding Party’s entrance (optional)

- _____
- _____

Entrance Chant (hymn, song, refrain) (required)

- _____

Following the Entrance Chant, all make the sign of the cross and the priest greets those present as usual at the beginning of Mass. He then addresses the couple and those present about the celebration of Marriage that is to take place.

The Penitential Act and *Kyrie, eleison* are omitted.

Gloria (required)

The Liturgy of the Word

The ritual Mass “For the Celebration of Marriage” can be used on most days throughout the year. On certain days of higher liturgical rank (such as Sundays and solemnities), the Mass of the day must be used with its own readings. However, on these days, the second reading may be taken from one of the options for the ritual Mass “For the Celebration of Marriage.”

When the ritual Mass “For the Celebration of Marriage” is used, there may be either one or two readings before the Gospel reading. If there are two readings, outside the season of Easter, the First Reading is always from the Old Testament and the Second Reading from the New Testament. During the Easter season, the First Reading is from the Book of Revelation and the Second Reading from the New Testament. “At least one reading that explicitly speaks of Marriage must always be chosen” (*Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, no. 55).

Normally only Catholics may proclaim the readings. The diocesan bishop can grant an individual exception to this in particular circumstances.

Texts of the readings can be found in *Together for Life* or at www.foryourmarriage.org/readings

During the readings, the couple is seated when the congregation is seated (*Diocesan Wedding Policy*, no. 9). The couple may choose to sit in chairs that are brought out for them or else in the pews with the bridal party.

First Reading (required)

- _____ Read by: _____

Responsorial Psalm (required)

- _____ Sung or read by: _____

Second Reading (usually optional)

- _____ Read by: _____

Gospel Acclamation (may be omitted if not sung)

During the season of Lent, the Alleluia is replaced by another acclamation.

- _____

Gospel Reading (required)

- _____

The Homily (required)

Following the homily, the priest addresses the couple.

The Questions before the Consent (required)

The priest asks the couple several questions to establish their freedom and willingness to enter into marriage.

The Consent (required)

The couple's own free exchange of consent is what causes them to be married. There are two formulas the groom and bride can use to declare this consent. Further, each can be stated directly by the couple or asked by the priest in the form of questions. The couple should select from among these four possible options, which are found in *Together for Life*, nos. H1-H12.

Which form of the declaration of consent will be used? _____

The blessing and giving of rings follows the declaration and reception of the consent. Following the giving of rings, "a hymn or canticle of praise may be sung by the whole community" (*Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, no. 68)

Hymn or Canticle of Praise (optional)

- _____

The Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful) (required)

Who will read the petitions? _____

Will the couple provide their own petitions? _____

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Offertory Chant (hymn, song, refrain) (optional)

- _____

The bread, wine, and water for Mass may be brought forward in procession by members of the congregation. If this is to be done, please indicate who will bring these forward:

- _____

Holy, Holy, Holy (required)

Acclamation following “The Mystery of Faith” (required)

Amen (required)

Our Father (required)

Nuptial Blessing (required)

Following the Our Father, the couple kneels and the priest prays the nuptial blessing over them. There are several options for the nuptial blessing, which may be found in *Together for Life*, nos. M1-M3.

Which form of the nuptial blessing will be used? _____

Sign of Peace (optional)

There is no singing during the Sign of Peace (cf. *Diocesan Wedding Policy*, no. 11).

The sign of peace is to be a culturally appropriate sign “in keeping with local customs, that expresses peace, communion, and charity” (*Order of Mass*, no. 128). Therefore, it would be appropriate for the newly married couple to exchange a modest kiss as their sign of peace if they so choose.

Communion Chant (hymn, song, refrain) (required)

- _____

Flowers to Mary (optional)

“At Mass, if the couple desires to take flowers to Mary, this may be done after the distribution of Holy Communion with a hymn to Mary (understood as the meditation hymn after Communion)” (*Diocesan Wedding Policy*, no. 12)

Will the couple take flowers to Mary? _____

If so, what hymn will accompany this? _____

The Concluding Rites

Announcements (optional)

Are there any announcements that the couple wishes to be made to the congregation?

Introduction of the Couple (optional)

The priest does not “pronounce” the couple as husband and wife, since it is the couple’s own exchange of consent that makes their marriage. For the baptized, this also means that by exchanging valid consent the couple (not the priest) confer the sacrament of matrimony on each other.

If the newly married couple wishes to be “introduced” or “presented” to the congregation, please indicate precisely how you would like your names to be said (e.g., “Mr. and Mrs. Smith”; “Mr. John and Mrs. Joanna Smith”; etc.). If you leave this section blank, you are indicating that you do not want to be introduced as a couple.

Final Blessing (required)

Dismissal (required)

Recessional Music (optional)

This may be instrumental or sung.

- _____

The procession out of church normally proceeds in the reverse manner of the entrance.

Immediately following their procession out, those who are acting as the legal witnesses (often the best man and maid of honor) should go to the sacristy to sign the marriage record with the priest.

Guidelines for the Selection of Music

No recorded music may be used during the wedding Mass. All music used during the sacred liturgy must be played or sung live.

“Here Comes the Bride” may not be used.

Diocesan policy is that no music by composer David Haas may be used in the liturgy (Bishop’s message of July 20, 2020).

The *Diocesan Wedding Policy*, no. 5 indicates: “All music in the church building is to be sacred music, including preludes; no ballads, pop, country, etc.”

Suggested Music

Any setting of the proper Entrance, Offertory, and Communion antiphons is appropriate (e.g., *Simple English Propers*).

Free resources provided by *Corpus Christi Watershed* may be helpful:

<https://www.ccwatershed.org/2017/10/06/three-entrance-antiphons-celebration-marriage/>

<https://www.ccwatershed.org/2013/06/3/free-responsorial-psalm-marriage-nuptial-mass/>

Hymns found in the parish hymnals are generally acceptable.

Instrumental pieces include: Pachelbel’s Canon, “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring,” and Trumpet Voluntary.

Eucharistic hymns include: “Draw Near,” “I Am the Bread of Life,” “Gift of Finest Wheat,” “Panis Angelicus,” “Taste and See,” “O Sacrament Most Holy,” “Adoro Te Devote,” “Wisdom’s Feast,” “Table of Plenty,” “I Received the Living God,” “Sweet Sacrament, We Thee Adore.”

Marian hymns include: “Hail Mary, Gentle Woman,” “Ave Maria,” “On This Day, O Beautiful Mother,” “Immaculate Mary,” “Hail, Holy Queen Enthroned Above,” “As We Kneel Before You,” and “Hail Mary.”

Other hymns include: “Set Your Heart on the Higher Gifts,” “Blest Are They,” “Seek Ye First,” “Praise to the Lord,” “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow,” “For the Beauty of the Earth,” “Blest Be the Lord,” “Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee,” “Not for Tongues of Heaven’s Angels,” “Prayer of St. Francis (Make Me a Channel of Your Peace),” “How Beautiful.”

Some Notes on Church Etiquette

Catholic weddings often involve the participation and presence of people who may not be familiar with the appropriate etiquette for a Catholic church. The following are some practical points of church etiquette:

At all times:

- It is not appropriate for older children or adults to eat or drink in the church, with the exception of water or food/drink that may be required for medical reasons (e.g., if someone is diabetic).
- It is not appropriate to chew gum in church.
- As a general rule, men should not wear hats in church.
- Phone calls and texting should be done outside of church if possible.
- It is inappropriate to play videos, games, or browse social media on one's phone in church.

Signs of reverence:

- When entering church, leaving church, and when crossing in front of the tabernacle, it is appropriate to genuflect to the Blessed Sacrament.
- When entering and leaving church, all are welcome to make the sign of the cross over themselves with holy water, even those who are not Catholic.
- All are welcome to light candles and pray in church, including those who are not Catholic.

The ceremony:

- Please silence all mobile devices.
- Respectful silence should be maintained in church to the extent possible before and after the wedding.
- If Holy Communion is distributed, as a general rule, only those Catholics who are prepared to do so (e.g., not conscious of unconfessed grave sin, having fasted for one hour, etc.), may receive Holy Communion.
- The Catholic Church also allows members of Orthodox Churches to receive Holy Communion.
- Other Christians and non-Christians may join in the responses, prayers, and songs to the extent they feel comfortable but are not generally able to receive Holy Communion in the Catholic Church.

Decorations and Dress:

- Decorations and clothing should reflect the sacred and liturgical nature of the wedding ceremony.
- During the season of Lent, except on the Fourth Sunday and on solemnities, decorations should be moderate. For example, flowers should not be placed near the altar.
- No signs, clothing, or decorations may be used that are overtly sexual, contain foul language or blasphemy, or that could be interpreted as sexualizing children (for example, a child holding a "Ladies, I'm single" sign).

Payments and Fees:

- You are under no obligation to give Fr. Schrader any payment for the celebration of your wedding. You may do so if you wish, but there is no expectation that you must.
- Fees / payments for musicians or others who provide a service should be worked out with those individuals directly.

Sample Petitions for the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful)

The couple may also modify these or write their own petitions, which they should print out and bring to the rehearsal.

For this bride and groom,
and for their well-being as a family,
let us pray to the Lord.

For their relatives and friends,
and for all who have assisted this couple,
let us pray to the Lord.

For young people preparing to enter Marriage,
and for all whom the Lord is calling to another state in life,
let us pray to the Lord.

For all families throughout the world
and for lasting peace among all people,
let us pray to the Lord.

For all members of our families
who have passed from this world,
and for all the departed,
let us pray to the Lord.

For the Church, the holy People of God,
and for unity among all Christians,
let us pray to the Lord.