

THE ORDER OF
CELEBRATING MATRIMONY

THE ROMAN RITUAL

RENEWED BY DECREE OF
THE MOST HOLY SECOND ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF THE VATICAN,
PROMULGATED BY AUTHORITY OF POPE PAUL VI
AND REVISED AT THE DIRECTION OF POPE JOHN PAUL II

THE ORDER OF
CELEBRATING MATRIMONY

ENGLISH TRANSLATION ACCORDING
TO THE SECOND TYPICAL EDITION

For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America

Approved by the
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
and Confirmed by the Apostolic See

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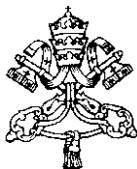
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CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS

Prot. n. CD 1068/89

DECREE

The rite of celebrating Matrimony formerly found in the *Rituale Romanum* was reformed in accord with the decree of the Second Vatican Council by the promulgation in 1969 by the Sacred Congregation of Rites of the *Ordo celebrandi Matrimonium*.

In this second typical edition the same *Ordo* is presented with an enrichment of the Introduction, rites and prayers, and with certain changes introduced in keeping with the norm of the Code of Canon Law promulgated in 1983.

By special mandate of the Supreme Pontiff JOHN PAUL II, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments publishes this new edition of the same *Ordo*. The *Ordo* in its second typical edition, composed in Latin, will come into force immediately upon publication; in vernacular languages, however, when translations have been confirmed by the Apostolic See, on the date decreed by Conferences of Bishops.

All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

From the offices of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, March 19, 1990, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph.

EDUARDO Cardinal MARTINEZ

Prefect

✠ Lajos Kada
Titular Archbishop of Tibica
Secretary



SACRED CONGREGATION OF RITES

Prot. n. R 23/969

DECREE

The *Ordo celebrandi Matrimonium*, revised in keeping with the norm of the decrees of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, in order that it might be enriched, might signify more clearly the grace of the Sacrament, and might impart a knowledge of the obligations of the married couple, has been prepared by the Consilium for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. Moreover, by his apostolic authority, the Supreme Pontiff PAUL VI, has approved this rite and ordered its publication. Therefore this Sacred Congregation of Rites, by special mandate of the Supreme Pontiff, promulgates it, directing that it be used from July 1, 1969.

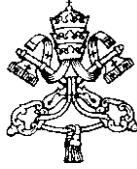
All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

From the offices of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, March 19, 1969, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

BENNO Cardinal GUT

Prefect, Sacred Congregation of Rites
and President of the Consilium

✠ Ferdinand Antonelli
Titular Archbishop of Idicra
Secretary



CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS

Prot. n. 84/14

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

At the request of His Excellency the Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz, Archbishop of Louisville, President of the Conference of Bishops of the United States of America, in a letter dated June 23, 2015, and by virtue of the faculty granted to this Congregation by the Supreme Pontiff FRANCIS, we gladly approve and confirm the text of the English-language translation of the *Ordo celebrandi Matrimonium, editio typica altera*, as found in the attached copy.

In printed editions, mention must be made of the approval and confirmation which this Congregation has conceded. Moreover, two copies of the printed text should be forwarded to this Congregation.

All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

From the offices of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, June 29, 2015, the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles.

ROBERT Cardinal SARAH

Prefect

✠ ARTHUR ROCHE
Archbishop Secretary



UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

DECREE OF PUBLICATION

In accord with the norms established by decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites in *Cum, nostra ætate* (January 27, 1966) and of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in *Liturgiam authenticam* (March 28, 2001), this edition of the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* is declared to be the vernacular typical edition of the *Ordo celebrandi Matrimonium, editio typica altera*, and is published by authority of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* was canonically approved for use by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on November 12, 2013, and was subsequently confirmed by the Apostolic See by decree of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on June 29, 2015 (Prot. n. 84/14).

The *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* may be used in the Liturgy as of September 8, 2016, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and its use is obligatory as of December 30, 2016, the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. From that date forward, no other English edition of the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* may be used in the dioceses of the United States of America.

Given at the General Secretariat of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC, on February 2, 2016, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord.

✠ Joseph E. Kurtz

Archbishop of Louisville

President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Reverend Monsignor J. Brian Bransfield

General Secretary

INTRODUCTION

I

THE IMPORTANCE AND DIGNITY OF THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

1. The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish a lifelong partnership between themselves,¹ derives its force and strength from creation, but for the Christian faithful it is also raised up to a higher dignity, since it is numbered among the Sacraments of the new covenant.
2. A Marriage is established by the conjugal covenant, that is, the irrevocable consent of both spouses, by which they freely give themselves to each other and accept each other. Moreover, this singular union of a man and a woman requires, and the good of the children demands, the complete fidelity of the spouses and the indissoluble unity of the bond.²
3. Furthermore, the institution of Marriage itself and conjugal love are, by their very nature, ordered to the procreation and formation of children and find in them, as it were, their ultimate crown.³ Children are thus truly the supreme gift of Marriage and contribute greatly to the good of the parents themselves.
4. The intimate community of life and love, by which spouses “are no longer two, but one flesh,”⁴ has been established by God the Creator, provided with its own proper laws, and endowed with that blessing which alone was not forfeited by punishment for original sin.⁵ This sacred bond, therefore, does not depend on human choice, but rather on the Author of Marriage, who ordained it to be endowed with its own goods and ends.⁶
5. Indeed Christ the Lord, making a new creation and making all things new,⁷ has willed that Marriage be restored to its primordial form and holiness in such a way that what God has joined together, no one may put asunder,⁸ and raised this indissoluble conjugal contract to the dignity of a Sacrament so that it might signify more clearly and represent more easily the model of his own nuptial covenant with the Church.⁹

1. Cf. *Codex Iuris Canonici* (C.I.C.) can. 1055, §1.

2. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, no. 48.

3. Cf. *ibid.*

4. Matthew 19:6.

5. Cf. Nuptial Blessing.

6. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, no. 48.

7. Cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17.

8. Cf. Matthew 19:6.

9. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, no. 48.

6. By his presence, Christ brought blessing and joy to the wedding at Cana, where he changed water into wine and so foreshadowed the hour of the new and eternal covenant: "For just as of old God made himself present to his people with a covenant of love and fidelity, so now the Savior of the human race"¹⁰ offers himself to the Church as Spouse, fulfilling his covenant with her in his Paschal Mystery.
7. Through Baptism, which is the Sacrament of faith, a man and a woman are once and for all incorporated into the covenant of Christ with the Church in such a way that their conjugal community is assumed into Christ's charity and is enriched by the power of his Sacrifice.¹¹ From this new condition it follows that a valid Marriage between the baptized is always a Sacrament.¹²
8. By the Sacrament of Matrimony Christian spouses signify and participate in the mystery of unity and fruitful love between Christ and the Church;¹³ therefore, both in embracing conjugal life and in accepting and educating their children, they help one another to become holy and have their own place and particular gift among the People of God.¹⁴
9. Through this Sacrament the Holy Spirit brings it about that, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her,¹⁵ Christian spouses also strive to nurture and foster their union in equal dignity, mutual giving, and the undivided love that flows from the divine font of charity. In this way, uniting divine and human realities, they persevere in good times and in bad, faithful in body and mind,¹⁶ remaining complete strangers to any adultery and divorce.¹⁷
10. The true development of conjugal love and the whole meaning of family life, without diminishment of the other ends of Marriage, are directed to disposing Christian spouses to cooperate wholeheartedly with the love of the Creator and Savior, who through them increases and enriches his family from day to day.¹⁸ Therefore, trusting in divine Providence and developing a spirit of sacrifice,¹⁹ they glorify the Creator and strive for perfection in Christ, as they carry out the role of procreation with generous, human and Christian responsibility.²⁰
11. For God, who has called the couple to Marriage, continues to call them to Marriage.²¹ Those who marry in Christ are able, with faith in the Word of God, to celebrate

10. *Ibid.*

11. Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris consortio*, no. 13: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis (A.A.S.)* 74 (1982), 95; cf. Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, no. 48.

12. Cf. C.I.C., can. 1055, §2.

13. Cf. Ephesians 5:25.

14. Cf. 1 Corinthians 7:7; Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, no. 11.

15. Cf. Ephesians 5:25.

16. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, nos. 48, 50.

17. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 49.

18. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 50.

19. Cf. 1 Corinthians 7:5.

20. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, no. 50.

21. Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris consortio*, no. 51: *A.A.S.* 74 (1982), 143.

fruitfully the mystery of the union of Christ and the Church, to live it rightly, and to bear witness to it publicly before all. A Marriage that is desired, prepared for, celebrated, and lived daily in the light of faith is that which is “joined by the Church, strengthened by a sacrificial offering, sealed by a blessing, announced by Angels, and ratified by the Father. . . . How wonderful the bond of the two believers: one in hope, one in vow, one in discipline, one in the same service! They are both children of one Father and servants of the same Master, with no separation of spirit and flesh. Indeed, they are two in one flesh; where there is one flesh, there is also one spirit.”²²

II

DUTIES AND MINISTRIES

12. The preparation and celebration of Marriage, which above all concern the future spouses themselves and their families, belong, as regards pastoral and liturgical care, to the Bishop, to the pastor and his associates, and, at least to some degree, to the entire ecclesial community.²³

13. It is for the Bishop, who is to take into account any norms or pastoral guidelines that may have been established by the Conference of Bishops regarding the preparation of engaged couples or the pastoral care of Marriage, to regulate the celebration and pastoral care of the Sacrament throughout the diocese by organizing assistance for the Christian faithful so that the state of Marriage may be preserved in a Christian spirit and advance in perfection.²⁴

14. Pastors of souls must take care that in their own community this assistance is provided especially:

1) by preaching, by catechesis adapted to children, young people, and adults, and through means of social communication, so that the Christian faithful are instructed about the meaning of Christian Marriage and about the role of Christian spouses and parents;

2) by personal preparation for entering Marriage, so that those to be married are disposed to the holiness and duties of their new state;

3) by a fruitful liturgical celebration of Marriage, so that it becomes clear that the spouses signify and participate in the mystery of the unity and fruitful love between Christ and the Church;

4) by help offered to those who are married, so that, faithfully preserving and protecting the conjugal covenant, they daily come to lead a holier and fuller family life.²⁵

15. Sufficient time is required for a suitable preparation for Marriage. Engaged couples should be made aware of this necessity in advance.

22. Tertullian, *Ad uxorem*, II, VIII: *CCL* I, 393.

23. Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris consortio*, no. 66: *A.A.S.* 74 (1982), 159-162.

24. Cf. *ibid.*; cf. C.I.C., can. 1063-1064.

25. Cf. C.I.C., can. 1063.

16. Led by the love of Christ, pastors are to welcome engaged couples and, above all, to foster and nourish their faith: for the Sacrament of Matrimony presupposes and demands faith.²⁶
17. The engaged couple, having been reminded, if appropriate, of the fundamental elements of Christian doctrine mentioned above (nos. 1–11) should be given catechesis not only about the Church’s teaching on Marriage and the family but also about the Sacrament and its rites, prayers, and readings, so that they may be able to celebrate it thoughtfully and fruitfully.
18. Catholics who have not yet received the Sacrament of Confirmation are to receive it to complete their Christian Initiation before they are admitted to Marriage if this can be done without grave inconvenience. It is recommended to the engaged couple that in preparation for the Sacrament of Matrimony they receive the Sacrament of Penance, if necessary, and that they approach the Most Holy Eucharist, especially within the celebration of Marriage itself.²⁷
19. Before a Marriage is celebrated, it must be established that nothing stands in the way of its valid and licit celebration.²⁸
20. In conducting the preparation, pastors, taking into account prevailing attitudes toward Marriage and the family, should endeavor to evangelize the couple’s authentic and mutual love in the light of faith. Even the requirements of law for contracting a valid and licit Marriage can serve to promote a living faith and fruitful love between the couple, ordered toward establishing a Christian family.
21. But if every effort fails, and an engaged couple openly and expressly demonstrate that they reject what the Church intends when the Marriage of baptized persons is celebrated, the pastor of souls is not permitted to celebrate the Sacrament. Though reluctant, he must take note of the situation and convince those involved that, in these circumstances, it is not the Church, but they themselves, who prevent the celebration they are asking for.²⁹
22. With regard to Marriage, it is by no means rare for special cases to arise: such as Marriage with a baptized non-Catholic, with a catechumen, with a person who is simply unbaptized, or even with a person who has explicitly rejected the Catholic faith. Those in charge of pastoral care should keep in mind the norms of the Church pertaining to these types of cases, and they should, if the occasion requires, have recourse to the competent authority.
23. It is appropriate that the same Priest who prepares the engaged couple should, during the celebration of the Sacrament itself, give the Homily, receive the spouses’ consent, and celebrate the Mass.
24. It also pertains to a Deacon, after receiving the faculty from the pastor or from the local Ordinary, to preside at the celebration of the Sacrament,³⁰ without omitting the Nuptial Blessing.

26. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 59.

27. Cf. C.I.C., can. 1065.

28. Cf. *ibid.*, can. 1066.

29. Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris consortio*, no. 68: *A.A.S.* 74 (1982), 165.

30. Cf. C.I.C., can. 1111.

25. Where there is a shortage of Priests and Deacons, the Diocesan Bishop can delegate laypersons to assist at Marriages, after a prior favorable vote of the Conference of Bishops and after the permission of the Apostolic See has been obtained. A suitable layperson is to be selected, who is capable of giving instruction to those preparing to be married and able to perform the Marriage liturgy properly.³¹ The layperson asks for the consent of the spouses and receives it in the name of the Church.³²

26. Other laypersons, however, can play a part in various ways both in the spiritual preparation of the engaged couple and in the celebration of the rite itself. Moreover, the entire Christian community should cooperate to bear witness to the faith and to be a sign to the world of Christ's love.

27. The Marriage is to be celebrated in the parish of one or other of the engaged persons, or elsewhere with the permission of the proper Ordinary or pastor.³³

III

THE CELEBRATION OF MATRIMONY

The Preparation

28. Since Marriage is ordered toward the increase and sanctification of the People of God, its celebration displays a communitarian character that encourages the participation also of the parish community, at least through some of its members. With due regard for local customs and as occasion suggests, several Marriages may be celebrated at the same time or the celebration of the Sacrament may take place during the Sunday assembly.

29. The celebration itself of the Sacrament must be diligently prepared, as far as possible, with the engaged couple. Marriage should normally be celebrated within Mass. Nevertheless, with due regard both for the necessities of pastoral care and for the way in which the prospective spouses and those present participate in the life of the Church, the pastor should decide whether it would be preferable to propose that Marriage be celebrated within or outside of Mass.³⁴ The following should be chosen with the engaged couple, as the circumstances so suggest: the readings from Sacred Scripture, which will be explained in the Homily; the form for expressing mutual consent; the formularies for the blessing of rings, for the Nuptial Blessing, for the intentions of the Universal Prayer or Prayer of the Faithful, and for the chants. Moreover, attention should also be given to the appropriate use of options provided in the rite as well as to local customs, which may be observed if appropriate.

30. The chants to be sung during the Rite of Marriage should be appropriate and should express the faith of the Church, with attention paid to the importance of the Responsorial Psalm within the Liturgy of the Word. What is said concerning the chants applies also to the selection of other musical works.

31. Cf. *ibid.*, can. 1112, §2.

32. Cf. *ibid.*, can. 1108, §2.

33. Cf. *ibid.*, can. 1115.

34. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 78.

31. The festive character of the celebration of Marriage should be suitably expressed even in the manner of decorating the church. Nevertheless, local Ordinaries are to be vigilant that, apart from the honors due to civil authorities in keeping with the norm of liturgical laws, no favoritism be shown to private persons or classes of persons.³⁵

32. If a Marriage is celebrated on a day having a penitential character, especially during Lent, the pastor is to counsel the spouses to take into account the special nature of that day. The celebration of Marriage on Friday of the Passion of the Lord and Holy Saturday is to be avoided altogether.

The Rite to Be Used

33. In the celebration of Marriage within Mass, the rite described in Chapter I is used. In the celebration of Marriage without Mass, the rite should take place after a Liturgy of the Word according to the norm of Chapter II.

34. Whenever Marriage is celebrated within Mass, the Ritual Mass “The Celebration of Marriage” is used with sacred vestments of the color white or of a festive color. On those days listed in nos. 1–4 of the Table of Liturgical Days, however, the Mass of the day is used with its own readings, with inclusion of the Nuptial Blessing and, if appropriate, the proper formula for the final blessing.

If, however, during Christmas and Ordinary Time, the parish community participates in a Sunday Mass during which Marriage is celebrated, the Mass of the Sunday is used.

Nevertheless, since a Liturgy of the Word adapted for the celebration of Marriage has a great impact in the handing on of catechesis about the Sacrament itself and about the duties of the spouses, when the Mass “For the Celebration of Marriage” is not said, one of the readings may be taken from the texts provided for the celebration of Marriage (nos. 144–187).

35. The main elements of the celebration of Marriage are to stand out clearly, namely: the Liturgy of the Word, in which are expressed the importance of Christian Marriage in the history of salvation and the responsibilities and duties of Marriage to be attended to for the sanctification of the spouses and of their children; the consent of the contracting parties, which the person assisting asks for and receives; the venerable prayer by which the blessing of God is invoked upon the bride and bridegroom; finally, Eucharistic Communion of both spouses and of others present, by which, above all, their charity is nurtured and they are raised up to communion with the Lord and with their neighbor.³⁶

36. If a Marriage takes place between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic, the rite for celebrating Matrimony without Mass (nos. 79–117) should be used. If, however, the situation warrants it, the rite for celebrating Matrimony within Mass (nos. 45–78) may be used, with the consent of the local Ordinary; but with regard to admission of the non-Catholic party to Eucharistic Communion, the norms issued for various cases are to be observed.³⁷ If a Marriage takes place between a Catholic and a catechumen

35. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 32.

36. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 3; Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, no. 12.

37. Cf. C.I.C., can. 844.

or a non-Christian, the rite given below (nos. 118–143) is to be used, with the variations provided for different situations.

37. Although pastors are ministers of Christ's Gospel for all, they should, nonetheless, direct special attention to those, whether Catholics or non-Catholics, who never or rarely take part in the celebration of Marriage or the Eucharist. This pastoral norm applies in the first place to the spouses themselves.

38. If Marriage is celebrated within Mass, in addition to those things required for the celebration of Mass, *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony* and rings for the spouses should be prepared in the sanctuary. There should also be prepared, if appropriate, a vessel of holy water with an aspergillum and a chalice of sufficient size for Communion under both kinds.

IV

ADAPTATIONS TO BE PREPARED BY THE CONFERENCES OF BISHOPS

39. It is for the Conferences of Bishops, by virtue of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy,³⁸ to adapt this Roman Ritual to the customs and needs of the particular regions, so that, once their decisions have been accorded the *recognitio* of the Apostolic See, the edition may be used in the regions to which it pertains.

40. In this regard, it is for the Conferences of Bishops:

- 1) To formulate the adaptations indicated below (nos. 41–44).
- 2) If necessary, to adapt and supplement this Introduction of the Roman Ritual from no. 36 and what follows (in "The Rite to Be Used"), so as to achieve the conscious and active participation of the faithful.
- 3) To prepare versions of the texts, so that they are truly accommodated to the nature of different languages and the character of diverse cultures, and to add, whenever appropriate, suitable melodies for singing.
- 4) In preparing editions, to arrange the material in a form more suitable for pastoral use.

41. In preparing adaptations, the following points should be kept in mind:

- 1) The formulas of the Roman Ritual may be adapted and, if necessary, even supplemented (even the questions before the consent and the words of the consent themselves).
- 2) Whenever the Roman Ritual gives several optional formulas, it is permitted to add other formulas of the same kind.
- 3) Provided the structure of the sacramental rite is preserved, the order of the parts may be adapted. If it seems more appropriate, the questions before the consent may be omitted, provided the law is observed that the person assisting ask for and receive the consent of the contracting parties.
- 4) Should pastoral need so demand, it can be determined that the consent of the contracting parties always be sought by questioning.

38. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 37–40 and 63b.

5) After the giving of rings, in keeping with local customs, the crowning of the bride or the veiling of the spouses may take place.

6) Wherever the joining of hands or the blessing and giving of rings are incompatible with the culture of the people, it may be decided that these rites be omitted or replaced by other rites.

7) It should be carefully and prudently considered what elements from the traditions and culture of particular peoples may appropriately be adopted.

42. In addition, in accordance with the norm of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (no. 63b), each Conference of Bishops has the faculty to draw up its own Marriage rite appropriate to the customs of the place and the people, with the decision approved by the Apostolic See, provided the law is observed that the person assisting must ask for and receive the consent of the contracting parties³⁹ and the Nuptial Blessing must be given.⁴⁰ The Introduction in the Roman Ritual is to be prefixed even to a proper ritual,⁴¹ except for those points that refer to the rite to be used.

43. In the usages and ways of celebrating Marriage prevailing among peoples now receiving the Gospel for the first time, whatever is honorable and not indissolubly connected with superstition and errors should be sympathetically considered and, if possible, preserved intact, and in fact even admitted into the Liturgy itself as long as it harmonizes with a true and authentic liturgical spirit.⁴²

44. Among peoples for whom the Marriage ceremonies customarily take place in homes, even over a period of several days, these ceremonies should be adapted to the Christian spirit and to the Liturgy. In this case the Conference of Bishops, in accordance with the pastoral needs of the people, may determine that the rite of the Sacrament itself can be celebrated in homes.

39. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 77.

40. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 78.

41. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 63b.

42. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 37.

CHAPTER I

THE ORDER OF CELEBRATING MATRIMONY WITHIN MASS

The Introductory Rites

THE FIRST FORM

45. At the appointed time, the Priest, wearing an alb and a stole and chasuble of the color of the Mass to be celebrated, goes with the servers to the door of the church, receives the bridal party, and warmly greets them, showing that the Church shares in their joy.
46. The procession to the altar then takes place in the customary manner. Meanwhile, the Entrance Chant takes place.
47. The Priest approaches the altar, reverences it with a profound bow, and venerates it with a kiss. After this, he goes to the chair.

THE SECOND FORM

48. At the appointed time, the Priest, wearing an alb and a stole and chasuble of the color of the Mass to be celebrated, goes with the servers to the place prepared for the couple or to his chair.
 49. When the couple have arrived at their place, the Priest receives them and warmly greets them, showing that the Church shares in their joy.
 50. Then, during the Entrance Chant, the Priest approaches the altar, reverences it with a profound bow, and venerates it with a kiss. After this, he goes to the chair.
-
51. Then, after the Sign of the Cross has been made, the Priest greets those present, using one of the formulas provided in *The Roman Missal*.

52. Then, in these or similar words, the Priest addresses the couple and those present to dispose them inwardly for the celebration of Marriage:

**We have come rejoicing into the house of the Lord
for this celebration, dear brothers and sisters,
and now we stand with N. and N.
on the day they intend to form a home of their own.
For them this is a moment of unique importance.
So let us support them
with our affection,
with our friendship,
and with our prayer as their brothers and sisters.
Let us listen attentively with them
to the word that God speaks to us today.
Then, with holy Church,
let us humbly pray to God the Father,
through Christ our Lord,
for this couple, his servants,
that he lovingly accept them,
bless them,
and make them always one.**

53. Or:

**N. and N., the Church shares your joy
and warmly welcomes you,
together with your families and friends,
as today,
in the presence of God our Father,
you establish between yourselves
a lifelong partnership.
May the Lord hear you on this your joyful day.
May he send you help from heaven and protect you.
May he grant you your hearts' desire
and fulfill every one of your prayers.**

The Penitential Act is omitted. The Gloria in excelsis (Glory to God in the highest) is said according to the rubric of the Roman Missal, Ritual Masses, V. For the Celebration of Marriage.

54. On those days when Ritual Masses are permitted, the Mass “For the Celebration of Marriage” is used with the proper readings.

However, on those days listed in nos. 1–4 of the Table of Liturgical Days, the Mass of the day is used, retaining the Nuptial Blessing in the Mass and, if appropriate, the proper formula for the final blessing.

If, however, during Christmas and Ordinary Time, the parish community participates in a Sunday Mass during which Marriage is celebrated, the Mass of the Sunday is used.

The Liturgy of the Word

55. The Liturgy of the Word is celebrated in the usual manner. There may be three readings, of which the First Reading should be from the Old Testament, but, during Easter Time, from the Book of Revelation (nos. 144–187). At least one reading that explicitly speaks of Marriage must always be chosen.

56. When the Ritual Mass is not said, one of the readings may be taken from those provided in the Lectionary for that Mass, except on a day listed in nos. 1–4 of the Table of Liturgical Days.

Readings that particularly express the importance and dignity of Marriage in the mystery of salvation are provided here.

THE FIRST READING

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.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5ac and 6a

R⁷. (see 1a) Blessed are those who fear the Lord.

or:

R⁷. (4) See how the Lord blesses those who fear him.

**Blessed are all who fear the LORD,
and walk in his ways!
By the labor of your hands you shall eat.
You will be blessed and prosper. R⁷.**

**Your wife like a fruitful vine
in the heart of your house;
your children like shoots of the olive
around your table. R⁷.**

**Indeed thus shall be blessed
the man who fears the LORD.
May the LORD bless you from Zion
all the days of your life!
May you see your children’s children. R⁷.**

THE SECOND READING

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, 25-32

**Brothers and sisters:
Live in love, as Christ loved us
and handed himself over for us.**

**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.
 The word of the Lord.

THE ALLELUIA AND THE VERSE BEFORE THE GOSPEL

Psalm 134:3

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

May the LORD bless you from Zion,
 he who made both heaven and earth. **R**.

Or, during Lent:

cf. 1 John 4:16b, 12, 11

R. (Psalm 81:2) Sing joyfully to God our strength.

God is love.

Let us love one another, as God has loved us. **R**.

THE GOSPEL

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.

57. After the reading of the Gospel, the Priest in the Homily uses the sacred text to expound the mystery of Christian Marriage, the dignity of conjugal love, the grace of the Sacrament, and the responsibilities of married people, keeping in mind, however, the various circumstances of individuals.

The Celebration of Matrimony

58. If two or more Marriages happen to be celebrated at the same time, the Questions before the Consent, the Consent itself, and also the Reception of the Consent must always take place individually for each Marriage; the remaining parts, however, including the Nuptial Blessing, should be spoken once for all in the plural.

59. With all standing, including the couple and the witnesses, who are positioned near them, the Priest addresses the couple in these or similar words:

**Dearly beloved,
 you have come together into the house of the Church,
 so that in the presence of the Church’s minister
 and the community**

**your intention to enter into Marriage
may be strengthened by the Lord with a sacred seal.
Christ abundantly blesses the love that binds you.
Through a special Sacrament,
he enriches and strengthens
those he has already consecrated by Holy Baptism,
that they may be faithful to each other for ever
and assume all the responsibilities of married life.
And so, in the presence of the Church,
I ask you to state your intentions.**

THE QUESTIONS BEFORE THE CONSENT

60. *The Priest then questions them about their freedom of choice, fidelity to each other, and the acceptance and upbringing of children, and each responds separately.*

**N. and N., have you come here to enter into Marriage
without coercion,
freely and wholeheartedly?**

The bridegroom and bride each say:

I have.

The Priest continues:

**Are you prepared, as you follow the path of Marriage,
to love and honor each other
for as long as you both shall live?**

The bridegroom and bride each say:

I am.

The following question may be omitted, if circumstances suggest this, for example, if the couple are advanced in years.

**Are you prepared to accept children lovingly from God
and to bring them up
according to the law of Christ and his Church?**

The bridegroom and bride each say:

I am.

THE CONSENT

61. *The Priest invites them to declare their consent:*

**Since it is your intention to enter the covenant
of Holy Matrimony,
join your right hands and declare your consent
before God and his Church.**

They join their right hands.

62. *The bridegroom says:*

I, **N.**, take you, **N.**, to be my wife.
I promise to be faithful to you,
in good times and in bad,
in sickness and in health,
to love you and to honor you
all the days of my life.

The bride says:

I, **N.**, take you, **N.**, to be my husband.
I promise to be faithful to you,
in good times and in bad,
in sickness and in health,
to love you and to honor you
all the days of my life.

The following alternative form may be used:

The bridegroom says:

I, **N.**, take you, **N.**, 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,
to love and to cherish
until death do us part.

The bride says:

I, **N.**, take you, **N.**, 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,
to love and to cherish
until death do us part.

63. If, however, it seems preferable for pastoral reasons, the Priest may obtain the consent of the contracting parties through questioning.

First, he asks the bridegroom:

**N., do you take N., to be your wife?
Do you promise to be faithful to her
in good times and in bad,
in sickness and in health,
to love her and to honor her
all the days of your life?**

The bridegroom replies:

I do.

Next, the Priest asks the bride:

**N., do you take N., to be your husband?
Do you promise to be faithful to him
in good times and in bad,
in sickness and in health,
to love him and to honor him
all the days of your life?**

The bride replies:

I do.

The following alternative form may be used:

First, he asks the bridegroom:

**N., do you take N. 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,
to love and to cherish
until death do you part?**

The bridegroom replies:

I do.

Next, the Priest asks the bride:

**N., do you take N. 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,
to love and to cherish
until death do you part?**

The bride replies:

I do.

THE RECEPTION OF THE CONSENT

64. *Then, receiving their consent, the Priest says to the bride and bridegroom:*

**May the Lord in his kindness strengthen the consent
you have declared before the Church,
and graciously bring to fulfillment his blessing
within you.**

What God joins together, let no one put asunder.

Or:

**May the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac,
the God of Jacob,
the God who joined together our first parents
in paradise,
strengthen and bless in Christ
the consent you have declared before the Church,
so that what God joins together, no one may put asunder.**

65. *The Priest invites those present to praise God:*

Let us bless the Lord.

All reply:

Thanks be to God.

Another acclamation may be sung or said.

THE BLESSING AND GIVING OF RINGS

66. The Priest says:

**May the Lord bless † these rings,
which you will give to each other
as a sign of love and fidelity.**

R. Amen.

Other formulas for blessing the rings, nos. 194–195.

He sprinkles the rings, as the circumstances so suggest, and gives them to the bride and bridegroom.

67A. The husband places his wife's ring on her ring finger, saying, as the circumstances so suggest:

N., receive 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.

Likewise, the wife places her husband's ring on his ring finger, saying, as the circumstances so suggest:

N., receive 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.

THE BLESSING AND GIVING OF THE ARRAS

67B. If the occasion so suggests, the rite of blessing and giving of the *arras* (coins) may take place following the blessing and giving of rings.

The Priest says:

**Bless, † O Lord, these *arras*
that **N.** and **N.** will give to each other
and pour over them the abundance of your good gifts.**

The husband takes the *arras* and hands them over to his wife, saying:

N., receive these *arras* as a pledge of God's blessing
and a sign of the good gifts we will share.

The wife takes the *arras* and hands them over to the husband, saying:

N., receive these *arras* as a pledge of God's blessing and a sign of the good gifts we will share.

68. Then a hymn or canticle of praise may be sung by the whole community.

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

69. The Universal Prayer then takes place in the usual manner (examples are provided in nos. 216–217).

After this, the Symbol or Creed is said, if required by the rubrics.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

70. If appropriate, at the Preparation of the Gifts the bride and bridegroom may bring the bread and wine to the altar.

71A. A commemoration of the husband and wife in the Eucharistic Prayer is made with a formula provided in nos. 202–204.

THE BLESSING AND PLACING OF THE LAZO OR THE VEIL

71B. According to local customs, the rite of blessing and imposition of the *lazo* (wedding garland) or of the veil may take place before the Nuptial Blessing. The spouses remain kneeling in their place. If the *lazo* has not been placed earlier, and it is now convenient to do so, it may be placed at this time, or else, a veil is placed over the head of the wife and the shoulders of the husband, thus symbolizing the bond that unites them.

The Priest says:

**Bless, ✠ O Lord, this *lazo* (or: this veil),
a symbol of the indissoluble union
that **N.** and **N.** have established from this day forward
before you and with your help.**

The *lazo* (or the veil) is held by two family members or friends and is placed over the shoulders of the newly married couple.

THE NUPTIAL BLESSING

72. After the Our Father, the prayer *Deliver us* is omitted. The Priest, standing and facing the bride and bridegroom, invokes upon them God's blessing, which is never omitted.

In the invitation, if one or both of the spouses will not be receiving Communion, the words in parentheses are omitted.

In the last paragraph of the prayer, the words in parentheses may be omitted if it seems that circumstances suggest it, for example, if the bride and bridegroom are advanced in years.

73. The bride and bridegroom approach the altar or, if appropriate, they remain at their place and kneel.

The Priest, with hands joined, calls upon those present to pray:

**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.**

Text with music, no. 205A.

Other formulas, nos. 104, 206, 208.

And all pray in silence for a while.

74. Then the Priest, with hands extended over the bride and bridegroom, continues:

**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.

Text with music, no. 205B.

Other formulas for the Nuptial Blessing, nos. 207, 209.

75. The prayer Lord Jesus Christ is omitted, and The peace of the Lord is said immediately. Then the bride and bridegroom and all present offer one another a sign that expresses peace and charity.

76. The bride and bridegroom, their parents, witnesses, and relatives may receive Communion under both kinds.

The Conclusion of the Celebration

77. At the end of Mass, the Priest, with hands extended over the bride and bridegroom, says:

**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 he blesses all present, adding:

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

R. Amen.

Other formulas, nos. 214–215.

78. When the Mass is concluded, the witnesses and the Priest sign the Marriage record. The signing may take place either in the vesting room or in the presence of the people; however, it is not to be done on the altar.