

CHAPTER II

The Sacrament of Marriage Apart from Mass

STRUCTURE OF THIS RITE

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Welcome and Entry Procession or Entry and Welcome
Greeting
Exhortation or Prayer

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Two or three Readings, with or without Psalm
Homily

LITURGY OF MARRIAGE

Address
Examination
The Consent
Exchange of Ring or Rings
Intercessions and Nuptial Blessing
Lord's Prayer¹
(Sign of Peace)
Documents

CONCLUDING RITE

Blessing and Dismissal

¹ Holy Communion apart from Mass, see Appendix C

The Sacrament of Marriage Apart from Mass

- 39 This rite is used when both bride and groom are baptised Catholics. It is also used by a deacon, duly authorised.

40

INTRODUCTORY RITES

At the appointed time, the priest, wearing alb or surplice, white stole and, if desired, white cope, proceeds with the ministers to the door of the church or, if more suitable, to the altar. There he greets the bride and bridegroom, showing them that the church shares their joy. Where it is desirable that the rite of welcome be omitted, the celebration begins at once with the greeting, the exhortation or prayer, and the liturgy of the word.

41 ENTRY PROCESSION

If there is a procession to the altar, the ministers go first, followed by the priest and then the bride and groom. According to local custom, they may be escorted by at least their parents and the two witnesses. Meanwhile, the **entrance song** is sung (see Appendix A).

The bride and groom may be placed at the front, or on either side with their families. The priest goes to his seat, or stands in the middle, makes the sign of the cross and greets the people as usual:

The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

or The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

or The Lord be with you.
or a similar biblical greeting.

R. And also with you.

42 EXHORTATION OR PRAYER

Unless a brief pastoral exhortation seems more desirable, he may now offer a prayer.

Let us pray (for God's blessing on this day).

- (a) Father, you have made the bond of marriage a holy mystery,
a symbol of Christ's love for his Church.
Hear our prayer for **N** and **N**:
with faith in you and in each other,
they pledge their love today.
May they always bear witness
to the reality of that love.
(We ask this) through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen

or

- (b) Father, hear our prayers for **N** and **N**
as they enter into the covenant of marriage.
Give them your blessing
and strengthen their love for each other.
(We ask this) through Christ our Lord. **R. Amen**

or

- (c) Almighty God, hear our prayer for **N** and **N**
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).
(Grant this) through Christ our Lord. **R. Amen**

or

- (d) Father, when you created mankind
you willed that man and wife should be one.
Bind **N** and **N**
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 this) through Christ our Lord. **R. Amen**

or another similar prayer.

43

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The liturgy of the word takes place in the usual manner as in the Lectionary (Chapman edition, page 910). There may be three readings, the first being from the Old Testament: in Paschaltide, the first should preferably be from Acts, the second from the Apocalypse and the gospel from St. John.

44 HOMILY

After the gospel, the priest gives a homily drawn from the sacred text. He speaks about the mystery of Christian marriage, the dignity of wedded love, the grace of the sacrament and the responsibilities of married people, keeping in mind the circumstances of this particular marriage.

After the homily, the priest may invite the couple and the chief witnesses to come forward to the sanctuary, if they are not already there.

45 If two or more marriages are celebrated at the same time, the questioning before consent, the consent itself and the acceptance of consent shall be done individually for each couple; the rest, including the nuptial blessing, is said once for all, using the plural format.

46 LITURGY OF MARRIAGE

All stand, including the bride and bridegroom, and the priest addresses them in these or similar words

N and N (Christian names),
you have come together in this church
so that the Lord may seal and strengthen your love.
Christ abundantly blesses this love.
He has already consecrated you by 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—
before me, its minister,
and with these your friends as witnesses—
I ask you to state your intentions
to live in lifelong fidelity to each other
and to God in whose image you have been made.

47 The priest then questions them about their freedom of choice, faithfulness to each other and the acceptance and upbringing of children:

I now ask you if you undertake
the obligations of marriage
freely and deliberately.

N and N, are you ready,
freely and without reservation,
to give yourselves to each other in marriage?

Each answers separately, first the bridegroom, then the bride:

I am.

Will you love and honour each other
as man and wife, for the rest of your lives?

Each answers:

I will.

The following question may be omitted if, for example, the couple is advanced in years:

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

Each answers:

I will.

48 THE CONSENT

(At an appropriate part of the ceremony, according to local custom, the bride may be "given away" by a relative or close friend).

The priest invites the bride and bridegroom to declare their consent:

Since it is your intention to enter into marriage,
declare your consent before God and his Church.

First he asks the bridegroom, inserting the full names:

N N, do you
freely and willingly
take N N, here present,
for your lawful wife
according to the laws of God
and of holy mother Church?

The bridegroom answers:

I do.

Then he asks the bride, inserting the full names:

N N, do you
freely and willingly
take N N, here present,
for your lawful husband
according to the laws of God
and of holy mother Church?

The bride answers:

I do.

- 49 The priest then says to the bridegroom and bride:
N and N, join your right hands.

The bridegroom takes the bride's right hand in his and says (or repeats after the priest):

Groom: I, N N,
take you, N 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
till death do us part.

The bride says (or repeats after the priest):

Bride: I, N N,
take you, N 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
till death do us part.

- 50 Having received their consent the priest says:

You have declared your consent before the church.
May the Lord in his goodness
Strengthen your married love.

Then the priest declares to all present:

“What God has joined together,
Let no man put asunder.” (Matthew 19, 6)

All present reply: Amen

And the couple release their hands

51 BLESSING AND EXCHANGE OF THE RING OR RINGS

The priest blesses the ring or rings, handed to him by the best man or a server.

- (a) May the Lord bless + this ring (these rings),
which you give (to each other)
as the sign of your love and fidelity.

R. Amen.

or

- (b) Lord,
bless + and consecrate N and N (Christian names)
in their love for each other.
May this ring (these rings)
be a symbol of true faith in each other
and always remind them of their love.
(Grant this) through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen

or (only when two rings are to be blessed);

- (c) 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

He may sprinkle the rings with holy water.

The groom gives the ring to his wife, putting it on the fourth finger of her left hand,
saying:

**Groom: With this ring I wed you,
in the name of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

The husband may also hand (gold and) silver to his wife, saying;

**Groom: This gold and silver I give you,
tokens of all my worldly goods.**

If the bride gives a ring to her husband, she does so in the same manner, saying:

**Bride: With this ring I wed you,
 in the name of the Father
 and of the Son
 and of the Holy Spirit.
 Amen.**

The prayer of the faithful is replaced by the following

52 THE INTERCESSIONS AND NUPTIAL BLESSING

The general intercessions and the nuptial blessing take place in this order.
First, the priest says one of these invitations:

(i) My dear friends, let us turn to the Lord
and pray that he will bless with his grace this woman (N),
now married in Christ to this man (N);
and that (through the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ,
he will unite in love the couple he has joined in his holy bond.

or

(ii) Let us pray to the Lord for N and N,
who come to God at the beginning of their married life,
so that they may always be united in love for each other
(as now they are to share in the Body and Blood of Christ).

or

(iii) My dear friends, let us ask God for his continued blessings
upon this bridegroom (N) and his bride (N).

or other suitable invitation to prayer.

Immediately after the invitation, there can be *either* a brief period of silence for prayer,
or a series of intentions as in the Prayer of the Faithful with responses by the people:
examples of intentions are given in Chapter I, para 32: others, previously composed,
may be used, provided they are in harmony with the blessing that follows and do not
duplicate it.

After the intentions, all pray silently awhile, then the priest extends his hands over the
couple and blesses them with one of the three following prayers.

FIRST NUPTIAL BLESSING

(In this prayer, only one of the first three paragraphs marked † need to be said: whichever corresponds best with the readings chosen).

† Father, by your power you have made everything out of nothing.
 In the beginning you created the universe
 and made mankind in your own likeness.
 You gave man the constant help of woman
 so that man and woman should no longer be two, but one flesh;
 and you teach us that what you have united may never be divided.-

† Father, you have made the union of man and wife so holy a mystery
 that it symbolises the marriage of Christ and his Church.-

† Father, by your plan man and woman are united
 and married life has been established
 as the one blessing that was not forfeited by original sin
 or washed away flood. –

- Look with love upon this woman, your daughter,
 now joined to her husband in marriage.
 She asks your blessing.

Give her the grace of love and peace.
 May she always follow the example of the holy women
 whose praises are sung in the scriptures.

May her husband put his trust in her
 and recognise that she is his equal
 and the heir, with him, to the life of grace.
 May he always honour her and love her
 as Christ loves his bride, the Church.

Father, keep them always true to your commandments.
 Keep them faithful in marriage
 and let them be living examples of Christian life.
 Give them the strength which comes from the gospel
 so that they may be witnesses of Christ to others.

(Bless them with children and help them to be good parents.
 May they live to see their children's children).

**And, after a happy old age,
grant them fullness of life with the saints
in the kingdom of heaven.**

(We ask this) through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen

(Turn to paragraph 56. page 12)

(In this prayer, only one of the first two paragraphs marked † need to be said: whichever corresponds best with the readings chosen).

† Holy Father, you created mankind in your own image
and made man and woman to be joined as husband and wife
in union of body and heart
and so fulfil their mission to the world. –

† Father, to reveal the plan of your love
you made the union of husband and wife
an image of the covenant between you and your people.
In the fulfilment of this sacrament,
the marriage of Christian man and woman
is a sign of the marriage between Christ and the Church.
Father, stretch out your hand and bless **N** and **N**. –

- Lord, grant that as they begin to live this sacrament
they may share with each other the gifts of your love
and become one in heart and mind
as witnesses to your presence in their marriage.
Help them to create a home together
(and give them children to be formed by the gospel
and to have a place in your family).

Give your blessings to **N**, your daughter,
so that she may be a good wife (and mother),
caring for the home,
faithful in love for her husband,
generous and kind.

Give blessings to **N**, your son,
so that he may be a faithful husband
(and a good father).

The following sentence is added when both parties are to receive communion:

Father, grant that,
as they come together to your table on earth,
so they may one day have the joy
of sharing your feast in heaven.

(We ask this) through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen

(Turn to paragraph 56. page 12)

**Holy Father, creator of the universe,
maker of man and woman in your own likeness,
source of blessing for married life,
we humbly pray to you for this woman (or N)
who today is united with her husband (or N) in this sacrament of marriage.**

**May your fullest blessing come upon her and her husband,
so that they may together rejoice in your gift of married love
(and enrich your Church with their children).**

**Lord, may they both praise you when they are happy
and turn to you in their sorrows.
May they be glad that you help them in their work
and know that you are with them in their need.
May they pray to you in the community of the Church
and be your witnesses in the world.
May they reach old age in the company of their friends
and come at last to the kingdom of heaven.**

(We ask this) through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen

56 **At a mixed marriage, if the Minister of the party who is not a Catholic is present, he may here be invited to address the couple and pray for them.**

57 **HOLY COMMUNION**

If Holy Communion is to be distributed, turn to Appendix C for the Rite of Holy Communion apart from Mass.

If Holy Communion is not to be given, then all may now say the Lord's Prayer, introduced as usual.

58 **SIGN OF PEACE**

The couple, the families, friends and all present may be invited to exchange a sign of Christian peace.

59 **DOCUMENTS**

The wedding group now retire to the sacristy or other place, or to a table in the church, to complete the documents. Meanwhile, the people may sing suitable hymns (see Appendix A) or listen to appropriate music in a prayerful spirit. Then the wedding group return to their places for the blessing.

Concluding Rite

88 After each rite of marriage, all kneel in their places. The priest, standing at his seat or in the centre, gives the blessing in the simple form or, if desired, in a solemn form. Then he gives the dismissal.

89 SOLEMN BLESSING

Priest: The Lord be with you. **R.** And also with you.
Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing
(or similar invitation)

He extends both hands over the couple and the people:

1 –God, the eternal Father,
keep you in love for each other,
so that the peace of Christ may stay with you
and be always in your home. **R.** Amen

–May (your children bless you)
your friends console you
and all men live in peace with you. **R.** Amen

–May you always bear witness to the love of God in this world;
so that the afflicted and the needy
will find in you generous friends
and welcome you into the joys of heaven. **R.** Amen

–And may almighty God bless you all:
+ the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **R.** Amen

2 –May God, the almighty Father,
Give you his joy
and bless you (in your children). **R.** Amen

–May the only Son of God have mercy on you
and help you in good times and in bad. **R.** Amen

–May the Holy Spirit of God
always fill your hearts with his love. **R.** Amen

–And may almighty God bless you all:
+ the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **R.** Amen

- 3 –May the Lord Jesus Christ,
who was a guest at the wedding in Cana,
bless you and your families and friends. R. Amen
- May Jesus, who loved his Church to the end,
Always fill your hearts with his love. R. Amen
- May he grant that,
as you believe in his resurrection,
So you may wait for him in joy and hope. R. Amen
- And may almighty God bless you all:
+ the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. R. Amen
-

90

DISMISSAL

The priest dismisses the people in these or similar words:

Go in the peace of Christ

or Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

or Go out in the joy of Christ's Love.

or Go in gladness, live your lives in God's joy.

All reply: Thanks be to God.

And all depart, to the accompaniment, if desired, of a hymn or suitable joyful music.