

THE ORDER OF CELEBRATING MATRIMONY

The Introductory Rites

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 fulfil every one of your prayers.

The Liturgy of the Word

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

r. (see 1a) blessed are those who fear the Lord. Or:

r. (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. *r.*

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

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. *r.*

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.

The Celebration of Matrimony

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

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

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.

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.

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 Reception of the Consent

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 fulfilment 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.

The Priest invites those present to praise God:

Let us bless the Lord.

All reply:

Thanks be to God.

The Blessing and Giving of Rings

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.

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

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 Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Nuptial Blessing

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.

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.

The Conclusion of the Celebration

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.