

## ***Planning Your Wedding as a Catholic Bride and Catholic Groom***

As you make your plans for marriage, keep in mind that noble simplicity should be the order of the day. A service with the Eucharist (Mass) should run approximately one hour. Your guests will appreciate the brevity and the sacredness of the event.

There are five basic parts to a wedding: The Procession, the Liturgy of the Word, The Exchange of Vows, the Mass (if acceptable), and the Recessional.

### ***Catholic Wedding With a Mass***

If you are both Catholic and wish to participate in the Eucharistic liturgy (the Mass), follow these simple guidelines. If one of you is not Catholic, but the Catholic party would still like a Mass, make sure that you have discussed this with the person performing your marriage before you proceed:

#### ***Procession***

There are a number of ways to begin your wedding service with a procession down the aisle. There isn't one traditional way. The basic rule of thumb is, "Getting down the aisle is far more important than **how** you get down the aisle."

The most common traditions for getting down the aisle are as follows:

#### **1.**

Seating of the Mother of the Groom

Seating of the Mother of the Bride

*(Lighting of the Taper Candles: This is used when a Unity Candle ceremony is included in the service. Often, the mothers of the bride and groom light the taper candles prior to being seated. However, this may also be done just before the Unity Candle ceremony).*

Procession of Wedding Entourage (ushers & bridesmaids)

Procession of the Bride with her Father or Parent  
(as the Groom stands at the sanctuary)

#### **2.**

Both Bride and Groom accompanied by parents,  
preceded by ushers and bridesmaids

*Included in your wedding entourage, a flower girl and ring bearer may be appropriate. Please keep in mind however that the children acting in this capacity should be old enough to walk down the aisle without becoming intimidated. To avoid "break downs" in the aisle, flower girls and ring bearers should process before the Maid of Honor. If necessary, the Maid of Honor could usher the children up the aisle before the procession of the bride.*

### ***Opening Prayer***

After the procession, the presider will begin with the sign of the cross and opening prayer.

### ***Liturgy of the Word***

You may select one or two readings for this portion of your liturgy. If you select two, one should be from the Old Testament and the other from the New Testament. In addition, the Responsorial Psalm selected should be sung. Go to the [Readings Page](#) to view the appropriate readings for your wedding ceremony.

It is very important to select a reader from your family or wedding party who has experience in some form of public speaking. In other words, make sure they know how to read before people. There is nothing worse than to simply pick a friend and then discover that he/she has fear standing before others. Also, make sure they are familiar with the text chosen. As you visit the Readings Page, you may copy them for the readers at your ceremony.

After the readings, psalm, and Gospel (which is only read by the clergy), the priest or deacon will offer a Homily.

### ***Exchange of Consent/Wedding Vows***

*Regarding the optional "Lighting of the Unity Candle": If the mothers of the bride and groom (or other guests) did not light the tapers of the unity candle prior to the ceremony, they may do it at this time prior to the exchange of wedding vows.*

The presider will address the bride and groom with words of encouragement and then ask them to state their intentions.

He will ask the following questions, while the you respond:

***Have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage?***

***Couple: We Have***

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

***Couple: We Will***

(If appropriate)

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

**Couple: We Will**

## **CONSENT**

The presider will then invite you as a couple to join your right hands and declare your consent. Here, you have three choices:

1) You may each respond to his questions with: ***I Do***

2) You may repeat after the presider the following words:

***I, (Groom) take you, (Wife), to be wife. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.***

***I, (Wife) take you, (Groom), to be husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.***

3) This alternative may also be used:

***I (name) take you (name) for my lawful wife/husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.***

## **RECEPTION OF CONSENT**

The presider and the community indicate that they have publicly received your exchange of vows.

## ***Exchange of Wedding Rings***

The wedding proceeds with the exchange of wedding rings. The presider blesses the rings and then invites you to repeat the following words as you place the rings on each other:

***(Name), take 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.***

## ***Options***

After the exchange of rings, a number of options are available to you at this time. However, please be selective in your choices. Try to avoid repetition of signs of unity.

## **EXCHANGE OF COINS**

Exchanging coins is a tradition found in some cultures. It was a sign that, through God's providence, the man would take financial care of his wife and home. In today's world, the

words for the exchange of coins should reflect a more inclusive role where both husband and wife, under God's providence, will mutually care for the financial concerns of the home. In this case, the following words (to be repeated after the presider) may be appropriate:

**Husband:** *(Name of wife), accept these coins as a sign of my pledge to be a good steward of what God will provide in our married life. All that I have receive, I give to you and to our home.*

**Wife:** *(Name of Husband), I accept these coins as a sign of our mutual pledge to be good stewards of all that God will give to our married life. All that I receive, I give to you and to our home.*

### **EXCHANGE OF BIBLE AND ROSARY**

A custom in some cultures is for sponsors to offer the bride and groom aides for spiritual growth in the marriage. It is a worthy custom that could give witness to your desire to live a Christian marriage. If you select this option, the presider simply invites the sponsors forward to present the bible and rosary. He may choose to say these or similar words (unless music is provided):

***(Name of Groom and Bride), as a Christian couple, you are to strengthen your marriage through the regular reading of Scripture. May this Holy Bible enlighten your hearts and minds. May this rosary be an aide for your spiritual lives as you meditate on the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord.***

### **LIGHTING OF THE UNITY CANDLE**

If this optional custom is selected, you are to provide your own unity candle and tapers. The mothers (or guests) would light the tapers before being seated at the beginning of the ceremony or directly after the presider's homily. The presider may choose to incorporate the following words in the ceremony at this time (unless music is provided) or previously during his homily:

***(Name of Groom and Bride), when you were baptized, you received a lighted candle with the words, "Receive the Light of Christ." You were to carry the light of Christ into the world. Today, joined together as one, you carry the light of Christ together. You are no longer two, but one.***

### **DRESSING OF THE VEIL AND/OR CORD**

In some traditions, the custom of veiling the bride and groom along with the cord (lasso or large rosary) is practiced. In other customs, only the cord is placed over the couple. The presider may choose to say these or similar words (unless music is provided):

If the veil ...

**In your baptism, you were clothed in the garment of Christ. May your marriage be clothed in Christ, who lives and reigns with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.**

If cord ...

**May the Spirit of God bind you together forever in love.**

### *Prayers of the Faithful*

You are encouraged to select a reader from your wedding party to lead us in the Prayers of the Faithful. The following may be read (or you may create your own petitions with the help of the priest or deacon who will preside at your wedding):

**Let us pray for the leaders of our Church and government. May the Lord continue to direct them as they lead our world toward peace and greater love. We pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Let us pray for all married couples, especially (Name of Bride and Groom) who are wedded today. May they be living signs of God's eternal love for us. We pray to the Lord. Lord hear our prayer.**

**Let us pray for the poor and lonely. May they find the love of Christ dwell within them. We pray to the Lord. Lord hear our prayer.**

**Let us pray for those who have died, especially for the relatives and friends of (Name of Bride and Groom). May they enjoy the eternal peace and total fulfillment in heaven. We pray to the Lord. Lord hear our Prayer.**

### *Procession of Gifts for the Liturgy of the Eucharist*

You are encouraged to select two guests to bring up gifts of bread and wine for the celebration of Mass. You may also choose to make a charitable gift offering to the poor as a sign that your love in marriage pours out and into the community around you. They may bring symbolic gifts such as a basket of food for the poor.

### *The Liturgy of the Eucharist*

The Priest will lead the community through the Eucharistic Prayer. You and your wedding party should respond to the parts of the Mass wherever necessary, in order to make your ceremony a true celebration.

### *Our Father and Nuptial Blessing*

If you selected to wear the cord and veil, the sponsors will be asked to remove them just prior to the Lord's Prayer (Our Father). After this, you will stand and recite the Our Father together with the community. Then the presider will extend his hands over you and offer the Nuptial Blessing.

### *Sign of Peace*

After the Nuptial Blessing, the priest will encourage those gathered to offer each other a sign of Christ's peace. As a bride and groom, you offer this sign to each other and then to

your Best Man and Maid of Honor. You may also offer the sign of peace to your parents. However, avoid making this a congratulations time with friends and relatives. This will be done at your reception after the wedding.

### ***Communion***

When it comes time for communion, you have the choice to receive under both species (the Body and Blood of Christ). Simply let the priest know before hand.

### ***Post Communion***

You may choose to present flowers, as the cantor and musician plays Ave Maria or other suitable hymn. Now that you are married, it best to have the bride and groom present the flowers at the shrine of the Virgin Mary. It is also acceptable for the groom to present a rose to his new mother-in-law and bride to her mother-in-law.

### ***Final Blessing and Dismissal***

The presider offers a final prayer and dismissal. He will introduce you to the community as man and wife. Please indicate just exactly how you choose to be introduced. For example, "Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to present to you Mr. and Mrs. John and Mary Smith"

The presider may invite the bride and groom to kiss.

Then, you will process out in the same way that you came in. Please note: Directly after the processional, if you wish to have pictures in the church, you must return immediately by going through the side doors and back to the sanctuary area. Remember, you have only thirty minutes after the celebration to take pictures in the church. Avoid having a reception line after Mass. There will be plenty enough reception at your party later.

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*If you aren't going to celebrate the Eucharist (the Mass), you will only be wearing the veil and/or lasso for a very short time. Keep this in mind before you choose this option.*

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### ***Flowers to Mary***

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