

THE ORDER OF CELEBRATING MATRIMONY WITHOUT MASS



79. When Mass is not celebrated, either by necessity or because of circumstances, the order described here is used, even by a Deacon.*

The Introductory Rites

The First Form

80. At the appointed time, the Priest, wearing an alb or surplice, and a white or festive stole, and even a cope (or a dalmatic for a Deacon) of the same colour, goes with the servers to the door of the church, receives the couple to be married, and warmly greets them, showing that the Church shares in their joy.
81. The procession to the altar then takes place in the customary manner. Meanwhile, the Entrance Chant takes place.
82. The minister 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

83. At the appointed time, the Priest, wearing an alb or surplice, a white or festive stole, and even a cope (or a dalmatic for a Deacon) of the same colour, goes with the servers to the place prepared for the couple.
84. When the couple have arrived at their place, the minister receives them and warmly greets them, showing that the Church shares in their joy.
85. Then the minister reverences the altar with a profound bow, venerates it with a kiss, and goes to the chair.

* Introduction, no. 24.

Then, after the Sign of the Cross has been made, he greets those present, saying:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Or some other suitable greeting, taken from *The Roman Missal*.

All reply:

And with your spirit.

87. Then, in these or similar words, the minister 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.

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 fulfil every one of your prayers.

89. Then, with hands extended, he says this prayer:

Be attentive to our prayers, O Lord, and in your kindness pour out your grace on these your servants (N. and N.), that, coming together before your altar, they may be confirmed in love for one another. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Other prayers, nos. 223, 224, 226, 227, 228.

The Liturgy of the Word

90. The Liturgy of the Word follows in the usual manner with texts taken from those provided above in no. 56 or with others from the readings indicated below (nos. 179-222).

At least one reading that explicitly speaks of Marriage must always be chosen.

91. Then the minister 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

92. 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.

93. With all standing, including the couple and the witnesses, who are positioned near them, the minister 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

94. The minister 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 minister continues:

Are you prepared, as you follow the path of Marriage,
to love and honour 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

95. The minister 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.

96. 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 honour 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 honour 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,
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,
until death do us part.

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

First, the minister 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 honour her
all the days of your life?

The bridegroom replies:

I do.

Next, the minister 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 honour him
all the days of your life?

The bride replies:

I do.

The Reception of the Consent

98. Then, receiving their consent, the minister 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.

99. The minister 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

100. The minister says:

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

1. Amen.

Other formulas for blessing the rings, nos. 229-230.

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

101. 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.

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

The Universal Prayer

103. The Universal Prayer then takes place (examples are provided in nos. 251-252):

a) first, the minister says the invitation to prayer;

b) the invocations of the Universal Prayer with the response of the faithful follow, but in such a way that the individual invocations should be consistent with the Nuptial Blessing, yet should not duplicate it;

c) if Holy Communion is not to be distributed, the Lord's Prayer follows;

d) then the concluding prayer is omitted and the minister invokes on the bride and bridegroom God's blessing, which is never omitted.

The Nuptial Blessing

104. The bride and bridegroom remain at their place and kneel.

Then, the minister, with hands joined, continues:

Now let us humbly invoke God's blessing
upon this bride and groom,
that in his kindness he may favour with his help
those on whom he has bestowed the Sacrament of Matrimony.

Other formulas, nos. 73, 241.

And all pray in silence for a while.

105. Then the minister, standing and turned toward the bride and bridegroom with hands extended over them, says the following prayer.

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.

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 favour 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 honour
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.

Amen.

Other formulas for the Nuptial Blessing, nos. 242, 244.

106. Then, if Holy Communion is not to be distributed, the minister immediately blesses the people, saying:

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

Amen.

107. It is a praiseworthy practice to end the celebration with a suitable chant.

Holy Communion

108. If Holy Communion is to be distributed, after the Nuptial Blessing, the minister approaches the place where the Eucharist is reserved, takes the vessel or ciborium with the Body of the Lord, places it on the altar, and genuflects.

109. Then, he introduces the Lord's Prayer:

At the Saviour's command
and formed by divine teaching,
we dare to say:

And all continue together:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

110. After this, if appropriate, the minister invites the faithful:

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Then the bride and bridegroom and all present offer one another a sign that expresses peace and charity.

111. When this has been completed, the minister genuflects, takes a host and, holding it slightly raised above the vessel or ciborium, while facing the communicants, says:

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who takes away the sins of the world.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

The communicants say together:

Lord, I am not worthy
that you should enter under my roof,
but only say the word
and my soul shall be healed.

112. After this, the minister approaches the communicants, raises a host slightly and shows it to each of them, saying:

The Body of Christ.

The communicant replies:

Amen.

And receives Holy Communion.

113. During the distribution of Communion, a suitable chant, if appropriate, may be sung.
114. When the distribution of Communion is over, if appropriate, sacred silence may be observed for a while, or a psalm or canticle of praise may be sung.
115. Then the minister says this prayer:

Let us pray.

Having been made partakers at your table,
we pray, O Lord,
that those who are united by the Sacrament of Marriage
may always hold fast to you
and proclaim your name to the world.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Conclusion of the Celebration

116. The rite concludes with the blessing of the bride and bridegroom and the people, either with the simple form *May almighty God bless you*, or with one of the formulas provided below, nos. 248-250.
117. When the celebration is concluded, the witnesses and the minister 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.