

# GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING YOUR WEDDING LITURGY

You will be assisted in planning your wedding liturgy by the Director of Sacred Music as well as the priest or deacon who will preside at your wedding ceremony. They will help you prepare a dignified and beautiful ceremony that speaks of your love united in the love of Jesus Christ. The following will assist you in this planning:

The Wedding Liturgy has two forms: The Order of Celebrating Matrimony **Within Mass** and The Order of Celebrating Matrimony **Without Mass**. Celebrating 'Within Mass' is the normal manner of celebration when both the bride and the groom are Catholic; however, under certain circumstances, they may choose otherwise.

When a Catholic and a non-Catholic are married, celebrating 'Without Mass' is the proper manner of celebration. The Sacrament of Marriage is a sacrament of unity but only Catholics are able to receive Communion; therefore, this can be perceived as a sign of disunity which the Church wants to avoid.

## **A. Readings**

The Liturgy of the Word – a proclamation of Sacred Scriptures – is a major part of every wedding. Three selections are chosen from Scripture:

1. First Reading (from the Old Testament)
2. Second Reading (from the New Testament)
3. Gospel Reading (from one of the four Gospels)

The Liturgy of the Word concludes with the Prayer of the Faithful which are petitions offered for the Church, the nation/world, those in need, those called to marriage, and those who have died, especially relatives and friends of the bride and groom.

The enclosed *Wedding Planning Form* will guide you through the process of selecting the Scripture readings for your wedding. Please mark your choices on the *Wedding Planning Form*.

## **B. Music**

Music that is selected for the celebration of marriage must be appropriate to the sacred character of the wedding liturgy. All music during the wedding must be of a sacred character. Love songs, popular music, and show tunes – while perhaps very eloquent in their evocation of the meaning of love and commitment – are more appropriate outside the wedding liturgy itself, i.e., at the reception. The Director of Sacred Music will help you make musical selections for the wedding liturgy and assist you in completing the *Wedding Planning Form*.

## **C. Worship Aid**

Offering the assembly an opportunity to fully

participate is essential; therefore, couples are asked to provide a Worship Aid. The Director of Sacred Music will offer guidance in creating the Worship Aid.

## **D. Decorations and Flowers**

**Flowers and Decorations**—The church is always decorated according to the liturgical season of the year. These decorations, as well as all furniture in the sanctuary, remain intact before, during, and after a wedding. Given the size of the sanctuary, it is not necessary to order flowers but the best placement would be at the ambo/pulpit or in front of the altar. Nothing may be placed on top of the altar.

**Pew Bows and Flowers**—It is preferred that no pew decorations be used; however, if pew decorations are used, *no taping or wiring* of any kind is allowed to affix either bows or flowers to the pews. String, rubber bands, or specially designed pew clips must be used to affix decorations to the pews.

**Candles**—Considerations for safety do not permit any use of candles in the church aisles. The unity candle is not part of the official Order of Celebrating Matrimony. If couples wish to have a unity candle, please incorporate it into the program at the reception.

**Rice, bird seed, confetti, balloons, and flower petals**—Absolutely no rice, bird seed, confetti, balloons, or flower petals are permitted either inside or outside the church because these items create safety, maintenance, and insurance problems. Flower girls are not permitted to throw petals in the main aisle of church. Because of environmental concerns, the release of helium balloons is discouraged. Please inform your families and friends of this policy.

**Aisle Runner**—Due to the danger of tripping, the use of an aisle runner is not allowed.

## **E. The Procession**

The following is a suggested order for the procession:

1. The Crucifix (perhaps carried by an usher)
2. The Priest/Deacon
3. The Attendants walking as couples
4. The Groom accompanied by his mother/parents
5. The Bride accompanied by her father/parents

Please discuss other processional options with the priest or deacon presiding at your wedding.

**Children in Wedding Party**—If children are part of the wedding party, they should be mature enough to follow simple instructions. Wagons and strollers are not allowed in the procession. Their parents must be in attendance and be able to take charge of them after they have walked down the aisle. Children will only take part in the entrance procession. Please be aware that children can be excited about participating in these important roles only to become overwhelmed at the time of the wedding.

#### **F. Conduct/Photography/Videography**

The church is a sacred place set aside for the worship of God. Please make sure your families and friends respect the sacred nature of the church and conduct themselves accordingly by not talking loudly, drinking beverages, eating food, wearing hats (by men), or using inappropriate language. Smoking is not allowed on church property.

Please ask your photographer and videographer to speak with the priest or deacon before your wedding begins. They will want to know where they can and cannot position themselves during the wedding.

No flashes of cameras/cell phones are allowed during the wedding. In your participation aid, it is helpful to request that your guests refrain from using flashes.

#### **G. Fees**

**Works of Charity**—Thank you for the \$200 Reservation Fee. This amount was deposited in the parish's Works of Charity Fund to help people in need.

**For Non-Parishioners and Inactive Members only**—Parishioners make sacrificial gifts to maintain church property and expenses. Non-parishioners and inactive members are asked to make an additional \$200 donation to the parish (payable to MMOC) for operational expenses. If this is your home parish, the additional fee is not necessary. If this fee applies, please make this donation no later than the rehearsal.

**Gratuities**—It is customary to offer a gratuity to the priest or deacon who presides at your wedding. It is customary that gratuities are given on the day of the wedding.

**Professional Expenses**—The musician(s) and singer(s) who provide music for your wedding should be justly compensated. Payment must be made no later than the wedding rehearsal.

#### **H. Time of Rehearsal & Wedding**

**Rehearsals** are scheduled anytime after 4:00 p.m. and last about one hour in length. Please contact the priest or deacon at least one month in advance to schedule the rehearsal. Music is not rehearsed at this time.

**Weddings** are at 1:00 p.m. or earlier. Presume about 1 hour 'Within Mass' and 40 minutes 'Without Mass.' Plan on finishing your pictures 30 minutes before the wedding begins. Here is a sample timeline:

10:30 a.m.	Wedding party and family members arrive dressed and ready for photographs*
11:30 a.m.	Photography begins
12:30 p.m.	Photography ends
1:00 p.m.	Ceremony begins
2:00 p.m.	Ceremony ends**
3:00 p.m.	Wedding party departs (The church is used for 3:15 pm Confessions & 4 pm Mass.)

\* A Bride's Room is available. Please inform the presider what time you would like the church unlocked for wedding preparation and the time you would like the church lights turned on for pictures.

\*\* Time is limited after the ceremony has concluded. A gracious and efficient way for the bride and groom to greet all of their guests is to immediately re-enter the church after the entire wedding party has processed out. In effect, the couple humbly becomes their own ushers, beginning with their parents. As the couple greets guests towards the back of church the photographer is able to set up for additional pictures in the front. Another option is to have a receiving line in the back of church. This option makes it less likely to greet each individual and offers less time for additional photography, if any. There is also the option of hosting the receiving line at the reception. Whatever your decision, please consider notifying your guests in the worship aid you provide.

#### **I. Other Liturgical Roles**

1. **Lectors**—Up to three readers are needed for the wedding ceremony: 2 readings and the petitions. The same person may proclaim all three. Lectors do not need to be Catholic but must be Christian.
2. **Gift-bearers & Ministers of Holy Communion**—These ministries are needed only for Mass and are to be performed by practicing Catholics. Altar servers are not required.

