

Wedding Planning Sheet

The Celebration of Matrimony without Mass

St. Joseph (Westphalia) and St. Anthony of Padua (Folk)
last revised January, 2025

“God, who has called the couple to Marriage, continues to call them to Marriage. Those who marry in Christ are able, with faith in the Word of God, to celebrate fruitfully the mystery of the union of Christ and the Church, to live it rightly, and to bear witness to it publicly before all.” (Order of Celebrating Matrimony, no. 11)

Who Should Attend the Rehearsal?

The rehearsal is the time for the couple and others who are involved to go over the wedding ceremonies with the priest. It is highly recommended that everyone taking on a particular role (reader, altar server, etc.) or involved in the entrance procession be present for the rehearsal. There is generally not time on the wedding day itself to instruct altar servers or others.

Names of altar servers (at least 1): _____

The Entrance

The *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* (2016) offers two forms for the entrance. The couple should choose one of these two forms and should write out the order of the wedding party (within the allowable options) for the entrance. This should be done before the rehearsal.

The *Diocesan Wedding Policy*, no. 7 indicates: “The entrance procession should not include children being pulled in a wagon; if a child is not old enough to walk unassisted, in an orderly fashion that avoids distraction, they should be carried by another.”

The First Form of the Entrance

If there is seating of grandparents/parents, this takes place first. (*Diocesan Wedding Policy*, no. 8)

The priest goes with the servers to the church entrance. There he greets the wedding party. Then there is a procession to the altar. The servers (with cross and candles) go first, followed by the priest, followed by the wedding party (including bridesmaids and groomsmen), followed by the couple using one of the following options (*Diocesan Wedding Policy*, no. 8):

- a) groom with parents; bride with parents; or,
- b) groom, then bride (with father); or
- b) bride and groom together

The Second Form of the Entrance

The priest goes with the servers to the place prepared for the couple in front of the altar and waits for the bridal party to arrive. The couple decides how to arrange the entrance of the wedding party and themselves. Seating of grandparents/parents may take place at any time.

When the couple have arrived at their place before the altar, the priest greets them. Then the ceremony continues.

Which form of the entrance will be used?

First Form _____ or Second Form _____

Devotions before the Wedding (optional)

The couple may choose to have the rosary or another devotion before the wedding.

Devotion: _____

Led by: _____

Prelude Music (optional)

The *Diocesan Wedding Policy*, no. 5 indicates: “All music in the church building is to be sacred music, including preludes; no ballads, pop, country, etc.”

Note: The wedding party should be starting to enter no later than the start time for the ceremony.

- _____
- _____
- _____

Instrumental Music for the Wedding Party’s entrance (optional)

- _____
- _____

Entrance Chant (hymn, song, refrain) (required when the First Form of the entrance is used)

The *Diocesan Wedding Policy*, no. 4 indicates that “this may take place immediately before, during or after the wedding party’s procession.”

- _____

Following the entrance, all make the sign of the cross and the priest greets those present. He then addresses the couple and those present about the celebration of Marriage that is to take place.

The Liturgy of the Word

There may be either one or two readings before the Gospel reading. “At least one reading that explicitly speaks of Marriage must always be chosen” (*Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, no. 55).

Normally only Catholics may proclaim the readings. The diocesan bishop can grant an individual exception to this in particular circumstances.

Texts of the readings can be found in *Together for Life* or at www.foryourmarriage.org/readings

During the readings, the couple is seated when the congregation is seated (*Diocesan Wedding Policy*, no. 9). The couple may choose to sit in chairs that are brought out for them or else in the pews with the bridal party.

First Reading (required)

- _____ Read by: _____

Responsorial Psalm (required)

- _____ Sung or read by: _____

Second Reading (optional)

- _____ Read by: _____

Gospel Acclamation (may be omitted if not sung)

During the season of Lent, the Alleluia is replaced by another acclamation.

- _____

Gospel Reading (required)

- _____

The Homily (required)

Following the homily, the priest addresses the couple.

The Questions before the Consent (required)

The priest asks the couple several questions to establish their freedom and willingness to enter into marriage.

The Consent (required)

The couple's own free exchange of consent is what causes them to be married. There are two formulas the groom and bride can use to declare this consent. Further, each can be stated directly by the couple or asked by the priest in the form of questions. The couple should select from among these four possible options, which are found in *Together for Life*, nos. H1-H12.

Which form of the declaration of consent will be used? _____

The blessing and giving of rings follows the declaration and reception of the consent. Following the giving of rings, "a hymn or canticle of praise may be sung by the whole community" (*Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, no. 68)

Blessing and Giving of Rings (required)

Flowers to Mary (optional)

"At a wedding without Communion, [taking flowers to Mary] may be done after the blessing and giving of rings (or after the blessing of arras, if this is done) with the hymn to Mary in the place of the optional 'hymn or canticle of praise.'" (*Diocesan Wedding Policy*, no. 12)

Will the couple take flowers to Mary? _____

If so, what hymn will accompany this? _____

The Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful) (required)

Who will read the petitions? _____

Will the couple provide their own petitions? _____

Our Father (required)

Nuptial Blessing (required)

Following the Our Father, the couple kneels and the priest prays the nuptial blessing over them. There are several options for the nuptial blessing, which may be found in *Together for Life*, nos. M1-M3.

Which form of the nuptial blessing will be used? _____

The Concluding Rites

Announcements (optional)

Are there any announcements that the couple wishes to be made to the congregation?

Introduction of the Couple (optional)

The priest does not “pronounce” the couple as husband and wife, since it is the couple’s own exchange of consent that makes their marriage. For the baptized, this also means that by exchanging valid consent the couple (not the priest) confer the sacrament of matrimony on each other.

If the newly married couple wishes to be “introduced” or “presented” to the congregation, please indicate precisely how you would like your names to be said (e.g., “Mr. and Mrs. Smith”; “Mr. John and Mrs. Joanna Smith”; etc.). If you leave this section blank, you are indicating that you do not want to be introduced as a couple.

Final Blessing (required)

Dismissal (required)

Recessional Music (optional)

This may be instrumental or sung.

- _____

The procession out of church normally proceeds in the reverse manner of the entrance.

Immediately following their procession out, those who are acting as the legal witnesses (often the best man and maid of honor) should go to the sacristy to sign the marriage record with the priest. If the legal witnesses do not sign in a timely manner, the priest may ask two others to sign instead.

Any photographs with the priest after Mass must take place *immediately* after Mass because of his other duties.