

Wedding Liturgy Information

With Information from the Diocese of Austin Pastoral Manual

Introduction

Liturgy, the prayer of the Church, is by its very nature communal. A parish assembly's celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is the normal way of celebrating any sacrament of other liturgy. Catholic weddings, therefore, are celebrations for the whole church as well as of individual couples.

It is important that the parish and the couple recognize the relationship they share with one another.

Goals for the celebration of the sacrament of marriage:

- To encourage the participation of the assembly in the wedding liturgy
- To express the faith and commitment of the couple and of the assembly
- To pray as a faith community for the couple, thereby offering them promise of support in their married life

General Guidelines

In this diocese, Catholic weddings are to take place in Catholic churches.

The general norms for liturgical celebration are to be followed at a wedding liturgy. The couple should be involved in the preparation of their wedding liturgy and may need guidance so that the celebration reflects the sacramental nature of their union. Several resources for preparing the wedding liturgy are available to guide them in the selection of scripture readings, prayers, blessings, and other options in the rite. Through prayer and reflection on these choices, the couple will be able to enrich the celebration with expressions of their faith.

Ministries of the Liturgy

Within each liturgical celebration there are a variety of ministries (readers, servers, Eucharistic ministers, etc.). Some roles can only be filled by a Roman Catholic minister (e.g. Ordinary or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion); however other ministries, e.g. reader, can be done by qualified persons of other faith traditions. Care should be taken in the selection and preparation of persons to fill these various roles; they should have the skills and spiritual gifts necessary to fulfill the ministry, not just a social relationship to the couple. If suitably skilled persons cannot be found by the couple, the parish should offer assistance from among its ministers. In no circumstances should all of the ministries be assumed by just one person, such as the priest or deacon.

The ministry role of the assembly is to participate in the celebration to the fullest extent possible. The liturgy should be prepared so that community participation is encouraged.

Entrance Rite

The procession may include liturgical ministers and the presider, as well as bride and groom, family members, and attendants.

Liturgy of the Word

Readings may be selected from the many options given in the lectionary for the Ritual Mass of Marriage or from other appropriate Scripture. Non-scriptural readings are not to be used. Both Psalm and The Gospel Acclamation are sung. The general intercessions should address the needs of the universal Church as well as those of the couple.

The Rite of Marriage

Since the exchange of vows by the bride and groom are the focus of the rite, they should be clearly visible to the entire assembly during this exchange of vows. Preferably they should face each other or the assembly so that their exchange of vows may be heard by all present.

The rite provides optional forms for receiving the consent of the couple.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

It is not recommended that the wedding couple be Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at the Wedding Mass. The couple should also remain in their places during the Eucharistic Prayer as members of the assembly. They are usually located near the sanctuary.

Admission to Holy Communion at a Catholic wedding is not possible under the present circumstances for members of non Catholic churches. It is recommended that the statement from the Bishop's Conference on reception of Holy Eucharist be inserted in the worship aid.

Condensed versions can be used such as the following:

We welcome everyone to this celebration of the Eucharist and the Marriage vows of *N.* and *N.* As fellow Christians we all long for the day on which we can all share in the Eucharist together. We cannot ignore, however, the differences that still exist among us as Christians. I would ask that as we Catholics now share in the Eucharist, the sign of our unity in faith, life and worship, that those of you from other Christian traditions will pray that this sad division will be healed, and that the unity prayed for by Jesus to the Father, "Father, may they all be one" will one day bring us to the joy of sharing the Eucharist together.

Music

When deciding what music fits into the liturgy, the general norm for liturgical music is to be followed, consultation with the parish music director and the use of the diocesan guidelines for wedding music. The music used before or during the liturgy must be clearly identifiable as prayer by all gathered.

Secular music may not be used as prelude or postlude music or within the wedding liturgy.

Music Ministers

The presence of a trained cantor should be encouraged at a wedding liturgy. The cantor's main role is to help the assembly participate in the singing.

Worship Aids

In order to encourage the participation of the assembly in the wedding liturgy, it is helpful to have a worship aid. This might be an available hymnal or a specially prepared order of worship containing the music to be sung. When preparing such a booklet, correct reprint permission is required to fulfill copyright law.

Parish Policies

Please see the ***Marriage Fees and Ceremony Guidelines*** for Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. Please see also the ***Marriage Deposit Agreement***.

Environment

The environment for the wedding should take into consideration the liturgical season. Quality and appropriateness are the two primary principles which govern the environment of worship. The arrangement of kneelers, flowers, candelabra, and other decorations should not obstruct the view of the assembly or inhibit their participation, nor should it restrict movement within the sanctuary.

Cultural Adaptations

The Church encourages cultural adaptations within the liturgy as long as the adaptations are in keeping with the nature and spirit of the liturgy. Each cultural adaptation should also be critically examined in light of its origins and content. Such adaptations should not overpower the liturgical emphasis on the rite. Care should be taken not to duplicate symbols in the celebration that might have similar meanings; for example, the lasso and the unity candle are both cultural adaptations which emphasize the union of two persons into a new life in Christ. The couple should be guided in making the appropriate choices in such adaptations.

Wedding Music Suggestions

Mariachis

Mariachi groups must be able to play a Catholic Mass. They must also be approved by the parish office.

Prelude

Unless the families have requests, these selections are left to the pianist/organist.

Seating of the Mothers/Bridesmaids

Pachelbel – Canon in D

Bach – Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring

Handel – Air from *Water Music Suite*

Sometimes an arrangement of a favorite hymn is played and/or sung here or another music selection is chosen.

Bridal Processional

Purcell – Trumpet Voluntary

Clarke – Prince of Denmark's March

Pachelbel – Canon in D

Bach – Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring

Stanley – Trumpet Voluntary, Processional in G Major

Mouret – Rondeau

Responsorial Psalm

The psalm should be sung.

Gospel Acclamation

Celtic Alleluia – Gather Hymnal, #258; or another "Alleluia" as appropriate

This should be sung by the cantor or by the priest if no cantor is used.

Preparation of Gifts

I Have Loved You – Gather, #405

We Have Been Told – Gather, #699

When Love is Found – Gather, #865

Wherever You Go – Gather, #872

A favorite hymn of the couple or couple's family is appropriate. The pianist/organist can play a solo meditation, as well.

Mass Setting

Mass of Creation, Gather, #166, 167A, 168 and 171; or another Mass setting can be used

We recommend singing this ONLY when there is a cantor for the ceremony.

Communion

A favorite hymn of the couple or couple's family is appropriate. The pianist/organist can play a solo meditation or a vocalist may sing something such as "Panis Angelicus" or "Ave Maria".

Dedication to Mary

Schubert – Ave Maria

Gounod – Ave Maria

Another arrangement of "Ave Maria" would be appropriate as well as a hymn dedicated to Mary. Not every couple has a dedication to Mary.

Recessional

Mendelssohn – Wedding March

Beethoven – Ode to Joy (Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee)

Handel - La Rejouissance

Mouret – Rondeau

Handel – Allegro Maestoso (from *Water Music*)