



Saint Mary Parish Wedding Liturgy Information

INTRODUCTION

The Wedding Liturgy is first and foremost the public worship of God. In other words, even though it focuses on the bride and groom, the wedding liturgy is the total community's act of worship within which the bride and groom's exchange of vows takes place.

What happens at Sunday Mass is the model to be used in planning a wedding. Therefore, the easiest way for a couple to plan and prepare this liturgy is to think about what happens at Sunday Mass.

This document is to serve as an aid as you think about the wedding liturgy. The details of the liturgy will be planned with the priest but this document will provide guidance along the way.

CHOICE OF MINISTERS

The bride and groom are the ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage. The best man and maid/matron of honor are the legal witnesses.

Cross Bearer – The procession that begins each sacramental service is intended to focus the attention of the community on the Lord and the fact that we have gathered to worship. The processional cross is that focal point. You may choose a family member or friend to carry the processional cross. This person should be present at the rehearsal and should be strong enough and old enough to be able to carry the processional cross.

Lectors – The lectors proclaim the first two Scripture readings and the Prayer of the Faithful (petitions). You may choose to have one lector read all three or you may divide the responsibility among two or even three lectors. Ideally, the lectors you choose will be someone who proclaims the Scriptures in their parish. However, anyone who is a baptized Catholic or Christian of another denomination and who reads well may proclaim the Scriptures. One lector also carries the Book of the Gospels in the opening procession. Lectors should be present at the rehearsal.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC) – If the wedding is celebrated within Mass, Communion will be distributed to baptized Catholics. If you have friends or relatives who perform this ministry at their parish, you might ask them to assist in distributing Communion at your wedding. The parish will provide EMHCs so providing ministers is not required but an option. These ministers must be practicing Catholics and they should be present at the rehearsal.

Gift Bearers – If the wedding is celebrated within Mass, you will need two gift bearers to present the bread and wine on behalf of all who are present. Anyone who is a baptized Catholic or Christian of another denomination may serve as a gift bearer. They should be present at the rehearsal.

Musicians – Sung prayer (music) is an integral part of the Catholic wedding ceremony and, therefore, is a part of every wedding celebration at St. Mary. The parish Director of Music and Liturgy is the primary musician at all weddings, whether within Mass or outside of Mass. A parish cantor is also required at all wedding celebrations and will assist in helping those in attendance join in the sung prayer of the celebration.

The Wedding Liturgy should allow for the full, active and conscious participation of the people you have invited. They are not merely spectators, but are present to pray for and with you on this most special day in your lives. The parish will print an order of worship that will list the order of the wedding ceremony, as well as the hymns that are to be sung.

THE GATHERING RITES

Your Ministers of Hospitality should warmly welcome the people as they arrive at church. During this time of gathering before the Entrance Procession, the prelude music is played.

The priest, lector and other ministers gather with you, your parents and the wedding party in the Gathering Space of church. The Entrance Procession is symbolic of God's people, the Church, gathering together for worship.

<p style="text-align: center;">Cross Lector with the Book of the Gospels Celebrant <Concelebrant(s)> Groom with parents <i>Mother / Grandparents*</i> Bridal Party Best Man & Maid of Honor <i>Ring Bearer*</i> <i>Flower Girl*</i> Bride with father or both parents <i>*Optional</i></p>
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PROCESSIONAL MUSIC AND GATHERING SONG:

These will be chosen when meeting with the Director of Liturgy & Music.

Your parents will be seated in the front pews. The attendant couples are seated in the pews one section over from your parents.

As the primary ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage, the bride and groom assume a prominent place in the sanctuary so that they are visible to all in the assembly.

After the procession, the presider will begin the liturgy with the Sign of the Cross. All will join in singing the Opening Hymn, and then the priest will offer the Collect (Opening prayer). If the wedding is celebrated within Mass the Gloria is also sung.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Your readings from Scripture must include a gospel text, to be preceded by two other Scripture readings. The first reading is taken from the Old Testament and the second reading is taken from the New Testament. All options for Scripture readings are found online at: www.stmaryhc.org/PlanningAWedding (Access Code: Matrimony).

A sung acclamation always precedes the Gospel reading. This is usually a series of intoned "alleluias" repeated by the assembly, coupled with a short psalm sentence and followed by the same series of "alleluias."

Proclaimed by the priest or deacon, who will then preach a homily based upon the readings.

THE RITE OF MARRIAGE

After the homily, the celebrant will invite you to stand in front of the altar, facing the assembly. Your wedding party will also join you in the sanctuary. The celebrant will then ask you to state your intentions by asking three questions. These ascertain the freedom of your decision, the permanence of your commitment, and your commitment to family life.

After answering these three questions, you exchange your vows. You may repeat the words of your vows after the celebrant or you hear them in the form of a question and respond "I do".

The marriage vows are the essence of the sacrament.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

If your wedding is celebrated outside of Mass, the ceremony will omit the indented sequence that follows and will continue with the Lord's Prayer.

If your wedding is celebrated within Mass, the gift bearers will present the gifts of bread and wine at this time.

The sung acclamations (Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, and Amen) will be chosen by the Director of Liturgy and Music.

The Lord's Prayer is prayed by all of the people.

At the Sign of Peace, the bride and groom will normally go together to share this greeting with their parents and then move into the sanctuary behind the celebrant, in front of the ambo

A Communion Hymn is sung while the Assembly receives Communion. This will be chosen when you meet with the Director of Liturgy & Music.

THE CONCLUDING RIGHTS

The presider will pray a concluding prayer and give the final blessing.

After the blessing, the wedding couple will be formally presented.

Recessional Music:

This will be chosen when you meet with the Director of Liturgy & Music.