

## ADDENDUM TO ARCHDIOCESAN MARRIAGE REGULATIONS

### ARCHDIOCESAN GUIDE FOR THE LITURGICAL CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE

*(Prepared by the Office of Liturgy and Sacramental Life)*

#### INTRODUCTION

“The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament” (*Code of Canon Law*, 1055).

The liturgical celebration of Christian marriage is predicated upon the Church’s understanding of the purpose and meaning of holy matrimony. The ancient liturgical maxim, “Lex orandi est lex credendi” (“the law of prayer is the law of belief”) applies to the liturgical celebration of marriage in that the words and actions of the wedding liturgy should signify the Church’s beliefs concerning the sacrament. The sacraments are understood as “the signs and instruments by which the Holy Spirit spreads the grace of Christ the head throughout the Church which is his Body” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 774). This applies to the sacrament of matrimony in no less a manner than it does to the other sacraments of the Church. Therefore, the liturgical celebration of holy matrimony must by its nature always be conformed to the Church’s liturgical norms and teachings.

The day of the wedding celebration is, beyond any other consideration, a day of rejoicing in the life of the whole Church, for in the sacrament of holy matrimony, the relationship between Jesus Christ and his bride the Church is signified and made present in the declaration of consent and the exchange of vows offered by a man and a woman. While it is indeed a particular and special day in the life of husband and wife, the fact that it is equally a time special to the entire Church must not be overlooked. The sacraments are official and public celebrations of the mystery of Christ by the whole Church. There is no such thing in our liturgical lexicon as a “private” sacramental celebration.

The purpose of this guide is to inform pastors, and those who assist them in the care of souls, of the liturgical norms for the celebration of marriage within the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas. The content of this guide is consistent with the liturgical law of the Latin Church, and when indicated, is taken directly from the liturgical norms of the Roman Rite.

This liturgical guide is to be taken as a supplement to the general norms for wedding celebrations found in the Rite of Marriage, promulgated by the Holy See on July 1, 1969, and the Marriage Regulations (Norms and Guidelines) promulgated by the Archbishop for the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas. Parishes are free to copy or adapt elements of this guide for inclusion in parish wedding guide books or other local wedding resources provided to engaged couples.

## I. THE COMMUNAL NATURE OF THE SACRAMENT:

All sacraments are actions of Christ and His Church and as such are essentially communal activities. Any appearance of individualism or division among the faithful who are present is to be avoided (cf. *Rite of Marriage*, 10).

The nature of this communal action, seen as an expression of the Church, demands that everyone in the assembly take his or her proper part so that the Church may be seen as one in its variety of orders and ministries (cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 17). This diversity of liturgical orders and functions is spelled out in the following sections.

## II. LITURGICAL MINISTRIES

### THE ASSEMBLY

The Sacrament of Marriage is an act of divine worship by the Church, thus the liturgical assembly is called by its very nature to a role of full, conscious and active participation. Any and all liturgical preparation must take this into account. The assembly is called to offer its prayers, acclamations and songs at the appropriate times, to witness the universal love of Christ and his Church, and to be signs of Christian love and support for the couple as they begin their married life together.

### THE PRIEST

The principal role of the priest is one of leading the various ministries and functions of others within the assembly. Specifically as leader of the wedding liturgy, he is called by the Church to witness and accept the vows of the couple in the name of the Church, and to draw all present into an active participation in the sacramental action. He does this most profoundly by his ministerial presence and by the manner in which he celebrates the sacred rites. When the Rite of Marriage is celebrated within Mass, the priest celebrant should normally be the one who celebrates the marriage rite. (cf. GIRM 108 and 109).

### THE DEACON

In the absence of a priest, deacons may also serve as the Church's witness and accept the vows of the couple in the name of the Church, this happens when the deacon presides at the Rite of Marriage celebrated outside of Mass. Like the priest, as the Church's ordained minister, the deacon should promote the active liturgical participation of all present. He, too, does this most profoundly by his ministerial presence and by the manner in which he celebrates the sacred rites.

### THE WEDDING COUPLE

In the tradition of the Latin Church, the bride and groom minister the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony to one another. In publicly declaring their commitment to one another in married love, the bride and groom minister the unifying grace of Christ's love to one another, and give singular witness of this covenantal love to those present at the celebration as well as to the entire Church and even society. Particular care should be taken in planning and celebrating to ensure that the principal rites, especially the declaration of consent and exchange of vows, be heard and seen by all present.

### LITURGICAL MINISTERS

The wedding liturgy should include those ministers needed to properly and reverently carry out the liturgical celebration. These ministries include altar servers, readers, liturgical musicians, ushers and other hospitality ministers, and, as needed, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. While

friends of the couple or members of their families may be invited to assume some or all of these functions and duties, careful consideration should be given to including qualified liturgical ministers from those within the community of the parish church where the wedding rites are to be celebrated. In any case, only those who are properly disposed and trained to serve in the various liturgical ministers should be chosen, especially when they concern the proclamation of Holy Scripture and the distribution of Holy Communion.

“The reading of Scripture during a Eucharistic celebration in the Catholic Church is to be done by members of that Church. On exceptional occasions and for a just cause, the Bishop of the diocese may permit a member of another Church or ecclesial Community to take on the task of reader” (*Directory for the Applications of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 133).

In the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas, permission to use non-Catholic readers during wedding liturgies, celebrated both during and outside of Mass, is habitually granted to the discretion of the pastor of the parish where the celebration is to take place.

Ministers from ecclesial communions that do not possess recognized orders may participate in the wedding liturgy as readers of scripture and in the announcement of the petitions of the prayer of the faithful. Only a priest or deacon is permitted to proclaim the gospel reading and offer the prescribed blessings of the liturgy. Only a priest, deacon or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion (who must be a practicing Catholic) may distribute Holy Communion at wedding Masses.

### III. LITURGICAL MUSIC

Music plays an indispensable role in the celebration of the sacred liturgy. Liturgical music, as it is “sacred song united to the words ... forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 112). The role of music in the rites of the Church is in some ways entirely different from that of music in popular culture and entertainment. Particularly, liturgical music is not rightly considered a matter of mere artistic expression, but rather is properly understood as the most solemn manner of expressing the words and accompanying the actions of the sacred liturgy.

Therefore, all music used during the liturgical celebration of holy matrimony is to be taken from the rich tradition of the Church’s liturgical heritage and repertoire. Popular songs, regardless of how well they attempt to express the ideals of love or how meaningful a role they may have played during the courtship of the wedding couple, have no place within the celebration of the sacred liturgy. The Church’s liturgy is properly celebrated with music intended for the liturgy. Wedding couples that desire to include popular music in their wedding celebration should be encouraged to do so at the reception or in some other non-liturgical aspect of the wedding day. The tradition of the Church also embraces appropriate classical instrumental works to accompany certain moments in the liturgy, such as the procession of the ministers and the recessional.

Those given responsibility for ministering as liturgical musicians in the wedding celebration should be familiar with the nature of Catholic liturgy and should be otherwise properly formed and trained to serve as liturgical musicians. As in the case of liturgical ministries, while qualified family members and friends of the wedding couple may be called to serve these roles, it is also strongly encouraged that qualified liturgical musicians from the parish be considered for these roles. Some parishes will develop particular guidelines and parish norms which specify how liturgical musicians for wedding celebrations are to be chosen.

## IV. LITURGICAL ART AND ENVIRONMENT

The Church embraces art as a means of giving glory to God as well as engaging the liturgical assembly and its ministers in the contemplation of goodness, truth and especially beauty. Particular norms govern the use of flowers during the liturgy. In Advent the use of flowers is to be in accord with the nature of the liturgical season, one of joyful and solemn anticipation of the Christmas feasts. In any case, the Church always strives towards a “noble simplicity” in which those responsible for liturgical preparation should strive “after noble beauty rather than mere sumptuous display” (cf. Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 124).

## V. LITURGICAL INCULTURATION

“The celebration of the liturgy, therefore, should correspond to the genius and culture of the different peoples” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1204). The modern Roman Rite permits certain cultural expressions which enable peoples of certain cultures to express their cultural identity in a manner consistent with the aims of the sacred liturgy. In each proposed case of liturgical inculturation and weddings, serious pastoral care must be taken to avoid admitting into the sacred liturgy anything which could be seen as profane or contrary to the Catholic faith.

Preliminary questions to be asked include:

What is the meaning of the proposed cultural action or symbol? In other words, what does it attempt to convey. Certain customs from the past are perhaps outdated today.

Is the cultural action or symbol readily understood? The meaning of a good symbol is immediately apparent and needs little explanation. For example, one piece of consecrated bread broken and shared by many clearly speaks of unity. When an action or symbol reflects a specific culture or ethnic background and is not easily understood by the entire worshipping community, its inclusion in liturgy should be questioned. If it is included, it is essential that an explanation somehow accompany it.

Is the cultural action or symbol an aid to participation? Liturgy is a communal action; it belongs to the Church and is properly expressed in ways that invite the participation of those gathered according to their office and role. Any cultural action or symbol which discourages participation or leaves the assembly in the role of an audience is not to be included in worship. For example, the function of the Lord’s Prayer is to prepare the assembly for Holy Communion. If it is sung by a soloist, the necessary active participation of the congregation is removed, contrary to the law and spirit of the liturgy.

In each and all of the cases noted above, the proposed inculturation must be of a religious nature. All forms of inculturation which are entirely secular in character have no place within the sacred liturgy.

Common cultural customs that are permitted in the liturgy of marriage are:

Christ (Unity) Candle: The candle used must be decorous and appropriately designed. After the exchange of vows and rings, the couple briefly goes to the candle, which is never to be placed on the altar, but in a separate and suitable place within or just outside the sanctuary. They light the candle from two already-lighted smaller candles placed nearby, signifying their unity in Christ and the sacrament of holy matrimony. Brief instrumental music may accompany this action, but the liturgical celebration should not be unduly interrupted or prolonged by this action and the music

which accompanies it. In recent years, the cultural popularity of the unity candle has decreased. If it has not been suggested or requested by the wedding couple themselves, it should not be encouraged, as it unnecessarily duplicates the unity signified through the exchange of rings, a sacramental rite proper to the wedding liturgy.

Floral Presentation to the Mother of God: Some couples may wish to dedicate their marriage to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary by processing to her image in the church and placing before her image a bouquet of flowers and offering a brief prayer. Oftentimes, this action is accompanied by the singing of a Marian hymn or chant, during which the wedding couple should remain before the image of Mary.

The Lasso or Wedding Rosary: This custom is prominent in the Hispanic culture and some Asian cultures. This wedding rosary is used to symbolize the unification of the couple through prayer. The wedding rosary is actually two individual and complete rosaries which meet and become one before the crucifix. It is typically placed by the priest over the couple after they have exchanged vows.

Arras or Wedding Coins: The giving of the Arras is also predominant in the Hispanic culture. The custom of the Arras usually involves a small box containing thirteen either gold or silver coins. The thirteen coins represent Christ and His twelve Apostles. The groom presents the Arras to the bride after the vows have been exchanged as a symbol of his readiness to provide financial support in their married life. This also signifies good financial stewardship of the household. When the groom gives the coins to the bride she promises to use them wisely. In these more modern times of two people often contributing financially to the household this custom still reflects the religious intent of a united couple managing finances through prayer.

Additionally, customs particular to other ethnic groups may be permitted during the marriage liturgy with the approval of the local ordinary or the proper pastor. Such things include the ceremonial breaking of a glass (permitted only in the interfaith marriage of a Catholic and a Jewish person), and the rite of crowning of the bride and groom (part of the eastern Christian rites of marriage, both Catholic and Orthodox). In each and every case, care must be taken to ensure that the cultural action or symbol is presented in a respectful and reverent manner, and that it does not interrupt or unduly prolong the progress of the nuptial liturgy.

## **VI. PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RECORDING**

Given the memorable nature of one's wedding day, most couples will want to record their memories with photos. While the making of arrangements for the reception of the sacraments does not necessarily include the right to have photographs taken in the church, wise pastors will most often permit photography as long as it is done in a respectful and unobtrusive manner. Of course, the church is never to be viewed as or reduced to a mere photo studio. If the pastoral decision of the proper pastor is to permit photography before, during and after the wedding liturgy, certain practices, as given below, should be observed.

Church buildings and their worship spaces settings vary from parish to parish. The chosen photographer, the wedding couple and the pastor of the parish should mutually understand the particular delineation of how weddings are to be photographed and recorded by video camera. Parishes are strongly encouraged to provide, early in the preparation process, written local regulations concerning wedding photography and video recording.

The following general principles should be taken into account:

## **Photography in Church before and after the Wedding Liturgy**

Any photography taken at the front of the parish church or on the steps of the sanctuary prior to the wedding liturgy should conclude no later than thirty minutes before the start of the service; then the photography and the arrival of guests will not coincide and the time necessary for the recollection of the wedding couple and witnesses will be possible. Photography after the ceremony should conclude in sufficient time so as not to interfere with the scheduled reception of the wedding couple and the scheduled time for parish confessions and/or other liturgical services.

## **Photography in Other Areas of the Church**

Pictures may be taken in other areas of the parish church, e.g., bridal room, parish hall, sacristy, etc. before or after the ceremony, as permitted by the pastor of the parish.

## **Photography during the Liturgy**

There should be a minimum of movement by photographers during the wedding liturgy. A skilled wedding photographer is practically “invisible,” that is to say they go about their work quite unnoticed. Photographers should be encouraged to imitate such skill. In churches where the photographer would be especially visible and a distraction to the liturgical prayer of the assembly, the photographer should remain at a pre-determined and fixed station in the church. The use of flash bulbs should not be permitted during the celebration of the liturgy.

Photographers are never to enter the sanctuary area, especially during the celebration of the liturgy itself, since movement or commotion there risks distracting the assembly from the liturgical actions taking place and the activities of camera operators risks irreverence in this sacred space. This means that some moments during the service may not be able to be photographed directly. The requirements of liturgical celebration are always to take precedence over the preferences of the photographer and wedding couple.

*In the lexicon of the Catholic Church, the sanctuary is defined as that particular area in which is to be found the altar, cross, ambo (lectern), presidential chair and tabernacle. It is typically distinguished from the body of the church building by being elevated one or more steps above the floor of the seating area (nave). It is in the sanctuary, or right before it, that the declaration of consent and exchange of vows takes place. The liturgy of the Eucharist is also celebrated from the altar in the sanctuary.*

With adequate planning and careful preparation by the chosen photographer and the wedding couple, pictures of the wedding liturgy can be appropriately taken, and without excessive time and distraction from the celebration of the liturgy itself.

## **Video Recording**

A video camera may be unobtrusively placed in a location outside the sanctuary. It may be left in the location with or without an operator. As in the case of photography, the use of video equipment is never to distract the liturgical prayer of the wedding couple, witnesses or liturgical assembly.

## **Multiplicity of Photographers and Cameras**

The pastor or other parish staff, in meeting with the wedding couple and others regarding the wedding liturgy, should seek cooperation and assistance in discouraging a multiplicity of cameras present during the liturgical celebration.

## VII. HOLY MATRIMONY—A SACRED ACTION IN A SACRED PLACE

The holy sacrament of Matrimony is a sacred action: Christ and his Church offer it to the faithful as the sacramental means of the uniting of husband and wife, where the two become one in Christ and each other. This sacred action is properly celebrated in a sacred place, the parish church (or other permitted church buildings). The church building is sacred because it has been set aside for divine worship: the recalling, proclaiming and making present of our salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The preparation period for marriage is an opportunity for those responsible for marriage formation to witness to the importance of maintaining a proper decorum before and after the wedding rehearsal and the wedding liturgy. That decorum constitutes our reverence for the church, a place made sacred by its blessing and dedication, by its sacramental celebrations, especially the Mass, by its reservation of the most holy Eucharist in the tabernacle, by the refuge and sanctuary it provides from the business of the world, and also by its very being, symbolizing through stone, brick and mortar the presence of God to the world.

Some things will by nature be precluded from the worship space of the church: extended photographic sessions, group talking or shouting, excessive visiting, and eating and drinking. These things will best take place in another area of the church premises. No alcoholic beverages of any kind (other than altar wine) may be brought into the worship space and alcoholic beverages shall not be consumed in the church before or during a wedding rehearsal or nuptial liturgy.

Through proper reverence, demonstrated through silence, posture and activity, the sacredness of the church and its worship space will be evident to all participating in the rehearsal and the liturgy. That God may be glorified.

## VIII. TIME OF CELEBRATION

In accord with local custom, weddings should not be celebrated on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation in this Archdiocese.

All marriages taking place in a parish church on Saturdays must be completed at least one hour prior to the regularly scheduled Saturday evening Mass. In accord with local custom, weddings in this Archdiocese should not be celebrated on Saturday evenings.

Marriage may be validated on any day.

When a marriage is celebrated during Advent the parish priest should advise the couple to take into consideration the special nature of these times. (cf. Introduction to Rite of Marriage #11)

In accord with local custom, no weddings should be celebrated during the season of Lent in this Archdiocese.

On solemnities and feasts, the liturgical ordo is to be consulted as to whether or not the Ritual Mass for Matrimony may be used, or if the Mass of the Day must be used but including the Rite of Marriage and Nuptial Blessing.

## IX. THE ORDER OF MARRIAGE CELEBRATED DURING MASS

Whenever Marriage is celebrated during Mass, the Ritual Mass for the Celebration of Marriage is used, with white vestments or those of a festive color. However, on those days listed in nos. 1-4 of the Table of Liturgical Days in the Roman Missal, the Mass of the day is used, retaining the Nuptial Blessing in the Mass and, if appropriate, the proper formula for the final blessing.

“Although complete Mass formularies are given [in the Missal] for the sake of convenience, all texts, especially the prayers and the Nuptial Blessing, may be exchanged, if appropriate, with others” (*The Roman Missal*)

### INTRODUCTORY RITES

The greeting of the bride and bridegroom at the doors of the church is optional (cf. *Rite of Marriage*, 19)

The procession takes the following order: “the ministers go first, followed by the priest, and then the bride and bridegroom. According to local custom, they may be escorted by at least their parents and the two witnesses. Meanwhile, the entrance song is sung” (*Rite of Marriage*, 20).

The accompaniment of the entrance procession by instrumental music, while traditional, should avoid any suggestion that the assembled congregation is to see themselves as a passive audience to the sacred liturgy. Following the entrance of the wedding party, it is encouraged that a suitable song be sung by the entire assembly, in keeping with the rubrics of the rite as well as the purpose and meaning of the entrance rites (cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 46).

“The Mass begins with the sign of the cross and the greeting. The Priest, or a Deacon or another minister, may very briefly introduce the faithful to the Mass of the day” (*The Roman Missal, Order of Mass*, 3).

In the third edition of Roman Missal, the penitential act is omitted (see Ritual Mass V “For the Celebration of Marriage”). The revised Missal also indicates that the *Glory to God* is to be sung at all wedding Masses, similar to that of feasts; this would include those celebrated during Advent and Lent.

The collect follows.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

“When the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself speaks to his people, and Christ, present in his word, proclaims the Gospel. Therefore, the readings from the Word of God are to be listened to reverently by everyone, for they are an element of the greatest importance in the Liturgy. Although in the readings from Sacred Scripture the Word of God is addressed to all people of whatever era and is understandable to them, a fuller understanding and a greater efficaciousness of the word is nevertheless fostered by a living commentary on the word, that is, by the Homily, as part of the liturgical action” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 29).

“The liturgy of the word is celebrated according to the rubrics. There may be three readings, the first of them from the Old Testament” (*Rite of Marriage*, 21). The readings appointed for the celebration of marriage are found in the Lectionary for Mass, Volume IV, numbers 801-805.

Non-biblical readings may never replace the biblical readings at Mass, and may never be given during the Liturgy of the Word.

The responsorial psalm sung by the cantor or psalmist should be from among those given in the lectionary for wedding liturgies. Several settings approved by the conference of bishops are available from the various publishers of liturgical music. “Songs or hymns may not be used in place of the Responsorial Psalm” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 61).

“After the gospel, the priest [or deacon] gives a homily drawn from the sacred text. He speaks about the mystery of Christian marriage, the dignity of wedded love, the grace of the sacrament and the responsibilities of married people, keeping in mind the circumstances of this particular marriage” (*Rite of Marriage*, 22).

## RITE OF MARRIAGE

After the homily, the wedding party stands. After addressing the bride and bridegroom, the priest or deacon questions them about their “freedom of choice, faithfulness to each other, and the acceptance and upbringing of children” (*Rite of Marriage*, 26). The final question may be omitted in the case of couples of advanced age. Then the priest [or deacon] invites the couple to declare their consent.

For the declaration of consent, only those formulas approved for use by the conference of bishops, confirmed by the Apostolic See, and included in the approved ritual, may be used in the Rite of Marriage. A couple is never free to compose their own words of declaration of consent.

“[If] two or more marriages are celebrated at the same time, the questioning before the consent, the consent itself, and the acceptance of consent shall always be done individually for each couple; the rest, including the nuptial blessing, is said once for all, using the plural form” (*Rite of Marriage*, 38).

The exchange of wedding rings complements the exchange of the wedding vows and signifies the visible sealing of the bond of marital unity. Three options are given for the blessing of the rings. The first two blessings refer directly to the rings with a petition that those who wear them may be a sign of the Lord’s love and fidelity. The third blessing refers to the couple and the rings are referred to as a symbol of their love.

The Universal Prayer (General Intercessions/Prayer of the Faithful) concludes the rite. The wedding couples may be given the opportunity to prepare beforehand the texts of the intercessions, guided by the priest or deacon. “The series of intentions is usually to be: a) for the needs of the Church; b) for public authorities and the salvation of the whole world; c) for those burdened by any kind of difficulty; d) for the local community. Nevertheless, in any particular celebration ... the series of intentions may be concerned more closely with the particular occasion” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 70).

“It is for the Priest Celebrant to regulate this prayer from the chair. He himself begins it with a brief introduction, by which he calls upon the faithful to pray, and likewise he concludes it with an oration. The intentions announced should be sober, be composed with a wise liberty and in few words, and they should be expressive of the prayer of the entire community. They are announced from the ambo or from another suitable place, by the Deacon or by a cantor, a reader, or one of the lay faithful. The people, for their part, stand and give expression to their prayer either by an invocation said in common after each intention or by praying in silence” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 71).

## LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

“During the offertory, the bride and bridegroom may bring the bread and wine to the altar” (*Rite of Marriage*, 30) and present it to the priest as customary at Mass. Other family members or friends of the wedding couple may also be invited to carry out the presentation of the offerings.

In the revised Missal, the Eucharistic preface may be found with the texts for the ritual Mass. The text for the commemoration of the new husband and wife, made during the Eucharistic Prayer (Prayers I, II or III), is found with the ritual Mass texts.

The Nuptial Blessing is found with the texts for the ritual Mass, and this text replaces option A of the blessing text as found in the 1970 edition of the Rite of Marriage. Options B and C may still be used as they are found in the Rite of Marriage.

At wedding Masses, following the Lord’s Prayer, “the prayer ‘Deliver us’ is omitted” (cf. *The Roman Missal*) and the Nuptial Blessing takes place.

Following the Nuptial Blessing, “the prayer ‘Lord Jesus Christ’ is omitted, and “The peace of the Lord’ is said immediately” (cf. *The Roman Missal*)

The sign of peace should be shared by the entire congregation. The new husband and wife may wish first to appropriately extend this sign to one another other, and then to their family and friends.

The following guidelines on the reception of Holy Communion are those issued by the USCCB. They serve to remind all those who attend Catholic liturgies of the present discipline of the Church with regard to the sharing of Eucharistic Communion.

“For Catholics: As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion. We are encouraged to receive Communion devoutly and frequently. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should not be conscious of grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord without prior sacramental confession except for a grave reason where there is no opportunity for confession. In this case, the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, including the intention of confessing as soon as possible (canon 916). A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance is encouraged for all.

“For our fellow Christians: We welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Eucharist as our brothers and sisters. We pray that our common baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in this Eucharist will draw us closer to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions which separate us. We pray that these will lessen and finally disappear, in keeping with Christ's prayer for us ‘that they may all be one’ (John 17:21). Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Holy Communion. Eucharistic sharing in exceptional circumstances by other Christians requires permission according to the directives of the diocesan bishop and the provisions of canon law (canon 844 §4). Members of the Orthodox Churches, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Polish National Catholic Church are urged to respect the discipline of their own

Churches. According to Roman Catholic discipline, the Code of Canon Law does not object to the reception of Communion by Christians of these Churches (canon 844 §3).

“For those not receiving Holy Communion: All who are not receiving Holy Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.

“For non-Christians: We also welcome to this celebration those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. While we cannot admit them to Holy Communion, we ask them to offer their prayers for the peace and the unity of the human family.”

## CONCLUDING RITES

“To the Concluding Rites belong the following: a) brief announcements, should they be necessary; b) the Priest’s Greeting and Blessing, which on certain days and occasions is expanded and expressed by the Prayer over the People or another more solemn formula; c) the Dismissal of the people by the Deacon or the Priest, so that each may go back to doing good works, praising and blessing God; d) the kissing of the altar by the Priest and the Deacon, followed by a profound bow to the altar by the Priest, the Deacon, and the other ministers [when the tabernacle is not located in the sanctuary; otherwise, a genuflection is made towards the tabernacle]” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 90).

If the traditional devotion of presenting flowers before an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary is to happen, it takes place following the Prayer after Communion.

The proper formula for the final blessing takes place using one of the options found at number 37 of the Rite of Marriage.

It is customary to have the newly-married, their parents, and the other members of the wedding party depart before the priest, deacon and other ministers. Instrumental music appropriate to the occasion may accompany the recessional of the wedding party and the priest, deacon and other ministers. However, lectors (readers) and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion do not recess in this manner, nor is the Book of the Gospels, if used, carried out at the end.

All those departing the church should be mindful of the sacredness of the worship space, and also of those wishing to remain in the church for private prayer.

## X. THE ORDER OF MARRIAGE CELEBRATED OUTSIDE OF MASS

### INTRODUCTORY RITES

The Rite of Marriage indicates that the priest or deacon is vested in “surplice and white stole” over the cassock or a “white cope, if desired” (cf. *Rite of Marriage*, 39). In the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas, when it is necessary, the priest or deacon may be vested in alb and white stole. The chasuble is not worn by the priest outside of the celebration of Mass.

“If there is to be a procession to the altar, the ministers go first, followed by the priest [deacon], and then the bride and bridegroom. According to local custom, they may be escorted at least by their parents and the two witnesses. Meanwhile, the entrance song is sung” (*Rite of Marriage*, 40). Appropriate instrumental music may accompany the procession. Following the entrance of the wedding party, it is encouraged that a suitable song be sung by the entire assembly, in keeping with the rubrics of the rite as well as the purpose and meaning of the entrance rites of liturgical services.

“Then the people are greeted, and the prayer [collect] is offered, unless, a brief pastoral exhortation seems more desirable” (*Rite of Marriage*, 40). These prayers may be at numbers 106-109 of the *Rite of Marriage*.

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

“When the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself speaks to his people, and Christ, present in his word, proclaims the Gospel. Therefore, the readings from the Word of God are to be listened to reverently by everyone, for they are an element of the greatest importance in the Liturgy. Although in the readings from Sacred Scripture the Word of God is addressed to all people of whatever era and is understandable to them, a fuller understanding and a greater efficaciousness of the word is nevertheless fostered by a living commentary on the word, that is, by the Homily, as part of the liturgical action” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 29).

“The liturgy of the word takes place in the usual manner. There may be three readings, the first of the from the Old Testament” (*Rite of Marriage*, 41) The readings appointed for the celebration of marriage are found in the Lectionary for Mass, Volume IV, numbers 801-805. Non-biblical readings may never replace the biblical readings at Mass, and may never be given during the Liturgy of the Word.

The responsorial psalm sung by the cantor or psalmist should be from among those given in the lectionary for wedding liturgies. Several settings approved by the conference of bishops are available from the various publishers of liturgical music. “Songs or hymns may not be used in place of the Responsorial Psalm” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 61).

“After the gospel, the priest [or deacon] gives a homily drawn from the sacred text. He speaks about the mystery of Christian marriage, the dignity of wedded love, the grace of the sacrament, and the responsibilities of married people, keeping in mind the circumstances of this particular marriage” (*Rite of Marriage*, 42).

## RITE OF MARRAIGE

After the homily, all stand. After addressing the bride and bridegroom, the priest or deacon questions them about their “freedom of choice, faithfulness to each other, and the acceptance and upbringing of children” (*Rite of Marriage*, 44). The final question may be omitted in the case of couples of advanced age. Then the priest [or deacon] invites the couple to declare their consent.

For the declaration of consent, only those formulas approved for use by the conference of bishops, confirmed by the Apostolic See, and included in the approved ritual, may be used in the Rite of Marriage. A couple is never free to compose their own words of declaration of consent.

“If two or more marriages are celebrated at the same time, the questioning before the consent, the consent itself, and the acceptance of consent shall always be done individually for each couple; the rest, including the nuptial blessing, is said once for all, using the plural form” (*Rite of Marriage*, 52).

The blessing and exchange of wedding rings complements the exchange of the wedding vows and signifies the visible sealing of the bond of marital unity. Besides the text found at number 47 of the Rite of Marriage, other forms of the blessing of rings may be found at 110-111 of the Rite.

The Universal Prayer (general intercessions/prayer of the faithful) and the blessing of the couple take place in this order: first the invitatory is given by the priest or deacon, the texts taken from numbers 33, 120 or 121 of the Rite of Marriage, or from any approved formulas for the general intercessions. There follows a brief silence or a series of intercessions, given and responded to in

the usual manner. Then, omitting the concluding prayer, the priest or deacon blesses the newly-married couple. The text for this blessing is found in the revised Roman Missal; the options given at numbers 120 -121 of the Rite of Marriage may also be used (cf. *Rite of Marriage*, 49).

The wedding couples may be given the opportunity to prepare beforehand the texts of the intercessions, guided by the priest or deacon.

If the traditional devotion of presenting flowers before an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary is to happen, it could take place following the nuptial blessing.

### CONCLUDING RITES

“The entire rite can be concluded with the Lord’s Prayer and the [final] blessing, whether with the simple form, May almighty God, or with one of the forms in numbers 125-127” (*Rite of Marriage*, 51). The greeting of peace may be done, as at Mass, for pastoral reasons, before the final blessing.

It is customary to have the newly-married, their parents, and the other members of the wedding party depart before the priest, deacon and other ministers. Instrumental music appropriate to the occasion may accompany the recessional of the wedding party and the priest, deacon and other ministers. However, lectors (readers) and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion do not recess in this manner, nor is the Book of the Gospels, if used, carried out at the end.

All those departing the church should be mindful of the sacredness of the worship space, and also of those wishing to remain in the church for private prayer.