

OFFICE FOR WORSHIP

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CELEBRATING MARRIAGE: LOOKING BEYOND THE ROUTINE

Everyone has been to a wedding or seen weddings on television. In fact, marriage is sadly one of the institutions to be more recently turned into ‘reality TV’. The result is that many people feel they know how marriages, be they religious or civil, can and should be celebrated. Couples will typically come to a celebrant with a firm idea already in their mind of how they want their wedding to look.

The pastoral challenge that celebrants face, therefore, is bridging what can be a significant divide between celebrating the rites of the Church, and a bride and groom’s expectations for their special day.

Still, the *Order for Celebrating Matrimony* offers a vision of a liturgical celebration that, like all liturgy, communicates a deep theological meaning.

Now that we have transitioned to the current edition of the *Order*, it is worth stopping and looking at four changes that we have now adopted, that offer an opportunity to engage those who participate in a deeper understanding of this sacramental celebration.

THE ENTRANCE

It’s a hard habit to break: the long-time image in many a bride’s mind of their father walking them down the aisle and “giving them away”. Many who insist on this practice don’t realise that it is a remnant of an understanding of marriage that simply doesn’t accord with modern expectations. What is more, the *Order* offers a different vision: that of the bride and groom arriving at the church together, demonstrating from the outset their coming together in mutual partnership, freely and willingly.

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There remains a pastoral sensitivity in the provision of two options. In the first, the celebrant greets the bridal party at the door; a practice that mirrors that of other ritual celebrations. In the second, the celebrant meets the couple at the place where they will sit. Careful reading of the rubrics, however, reveals the implication that in both cases, the preference is that the couple come to either place together. While it may be hard to change the minds of some, encouraging a change to the archaic notion of “giving the bride away” is surely one that is worth the effort.

THE GLORIA

Those who read carefully over the rubrics of the Ritual Mass For the Celebration of Marriage in the latest edition of the Roman Missal would have noticed the rubric indicating the inclusion of the Gloria; something that was not previously called for in either the formal missal or Rite of Marriage. We now also see this change reflected in the current Order of Celebrating Matrimony Within Mass.

This inclusion sees the nuptial

Mass afforded a similar degree of solemnity to feast days. The challenge in many cases today, however, is choosing a suitable musical setting that can encourage an assembly not familiar with Sunday Mass to join in this festive hymn.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The introduction to the *Order* describes the Liturgy of the Word as one of the main elements of the celebration. The collection of readings provided was also expanded in this current edition. While this is often one of those times where reading roles are allocated to relatives or friends, we also owe it to the assembly for them to hear an outstanding proclamation of the Scriptures, and experience God speaking to them.

Couples, therefore, should be encouraged to think carefully about who can fulfil this duty well. Alternatively, inviting Ministers of the Word from the parish community could help remind all involved that this sacramental celebration is one that belongs to the whole Church. Music

ministers who serve at weddings will need to have in their settings of the various responsorial psalms repertoire and be well rehearsed.

THE RECEPTION OF THE CONSENT

The texts for the reception of consent were revised for this current edition, and again, there is an opportunity to engage the assembly that can easily be missed, or passed over with little fanfare. The celebrant invites to praise God for the commitment that has just been made by the couple. The rubric also suggests the possibility of singing an acclamation. Again, while it may be a challenge to successfully draw many wedding assemblies into a sung acclamation, being able to do so would be a fitting recognition of what the assembly has just witnessed.

Celebrating the wedding ritual well does present its challenges. The opportunity for evangelisation and formation that it presents, however, makes it important for us to try and realise the full potential of the ritual.

SOURCING SCRIPTURE TEXTS FOR MARRIAGE CELEBRATIONS

It is a common and good practice for the bride and groom to be invited to select the readings for their wedding. Often someone in the family will prepare a booklet for the assembly. With the ease of locating material on the internet, it is easy for people to source the texts of readings from biblical translations that are not approved for use in Australia.

Care needs to be taken that those preparing the readings make use of either the *Jerusalem Bible* or *New Revised Standard Version* translations, or, in the case of the psalms, the appropriate Grail translation. Digital versions of the correct translations are most easily sourced from online liturgy preparation resources such as *Liturgia* or *Liturgy Help*.



THE WEDDING



BY  LITURGIA

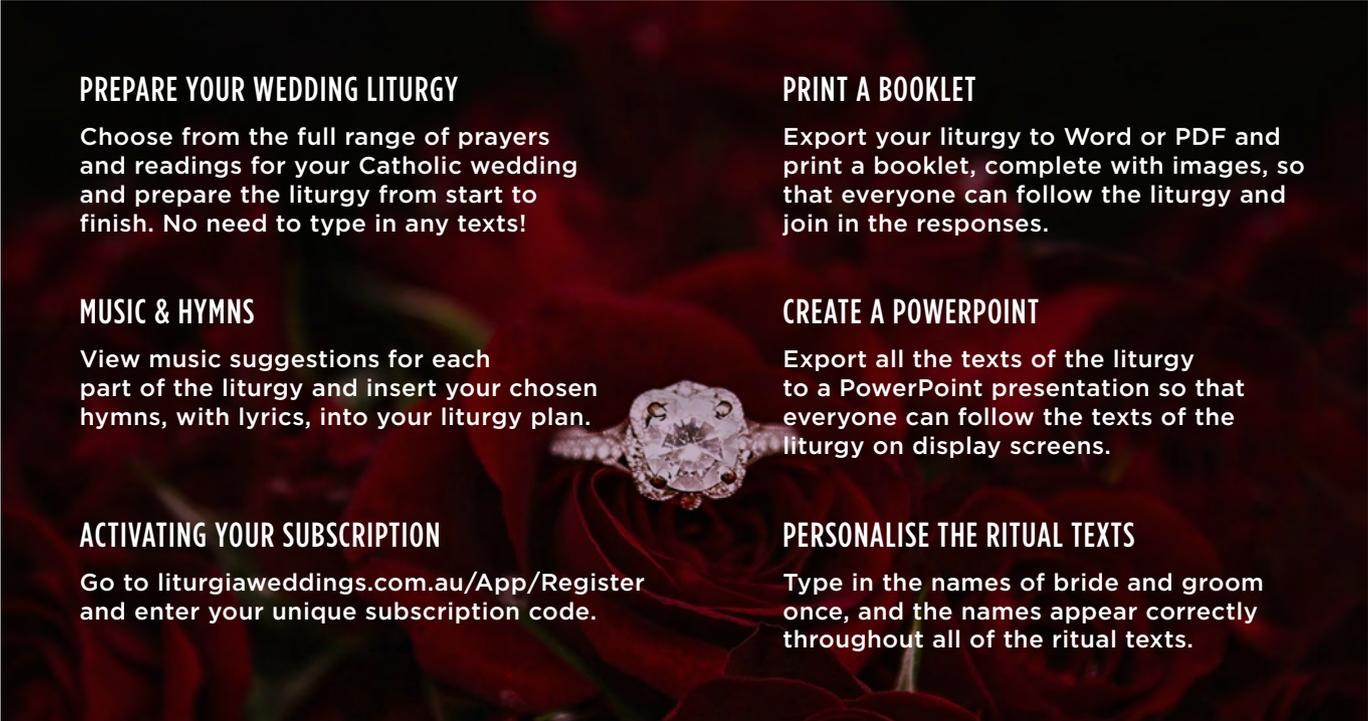
liturgiaweddings.com.au
A resource from Liturgy Brisbane

THE WEDDING BY LITURGIA

Following the release of its new online liturgy preparation resource, *Liturgia*, Liturgy Brisbane has now released *The Wedding*, an online resource using the *Liturgia* platform for preparing marriage celebrations. It is a comprehensive resource that provides ready access to the official liturgical texts and allows those preparing celebrations to compose an Order of Service and produce booklets.

The Wedding by Liturgia also complements Liturgy Brisbane's preparation resource, *When We Marry*, and the two resources can be purchased together as a package. Couples can purchase *The Wedding* themselves, or parishes can purchase copies from Liturgy Brisbane to give to couples as part of their preparation.

ROBERT BARDEN IS THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE DIOCESAN LITURGICAL COMMISSION



PREPARE YOUR WEDDING LITURGY

Choose from the full range of prayers and readings for your Catholic wedding and prepare the liturgy from start to finish. No need to type in any texts!

MUSIC & HYMNS

View music suggestions for each part of the liturgy and insert your chosen hymns, with lyrics, into your liturgy plan.

ACTIVATING YOUR SUBSCRIPTION

Go to liturgiaweddings.com.au/App/Register and enter your unique subscription code.

PRINT A BOOKLET

Export your liturgy to Word or PDF and print a booklet, complete with images, so that everyone can follow the liturgy and join in the responses.

CREATE A POWERPOINT

Export all the texts of the liturgy to a PowerPoint presentation so that everyone can follow the texts of the liturgy on display screens.

PERSONALISE THE RITUAL TEXTS

Type in the names of bride and groom once, and the names appear correctly throughout all of the ritual texts.

MUSIC FOR CATHOLIC WEDDINGS

BY BERNARD KIRKPATRICK

“Everybody loves a wedding!”..... so the saying goes. It’s a time of great celebration for the couple and their families, and of course, it’s a busy time of preparation in the lead up to the big day. There’s so much to organise, and there is usually a large investment of both time and money in arranging everything perfectly for what is the first day of a couple’s life long journey into marriage - booking the church, finding the right venue for the reception, choosing the right dresses for the bride and bridesmaids and suits for the groom and groomsmen. Then there’s the guest list, and the photographer and what cars are we having again? Oh, and did I mention the flower arrangements? And so the list goes on!

It’s easy, therefore, to get swept up in organising these accessories, but what of the arrangements for the key part of the wedding celebration... i.e. the Liturgy? Sometimes it’s easy to think that the wedding celebration is a “private affair”, and that “it’s the bride’s day” as if there is no obligation to remember that the Sacrament of Matrimony is something which involves the whole church, or that the Rite of Marriage is given to us from the Church and her tradition.

The Introduction of the new Order of Celebrating Matrimony¹ states in para 12 “The preparation and celebration of Marriage, ...belong, as regards pastoral and liturgical care, to the Bishop, to the pastor and his associates, and at least to some degree, to the entire ecclesial community (Cf/ JP II Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*. No. 66 A.A.S. 74 (1982) 159-162.

How does this impact on the Liturgy of Marriage, and, in particular, on the music arrangements for such liturgy? Since it is an ecclesial event, then music arrangements should conform to the principals required of music in our other liturgical celebrations. Para 30 of the New Order of Matrimony also requires that music “should express the faith of the Church”. Music which does not do this, or expresses secular themes or non-Christian concepts of love for example, should be discouraged. Choices such as “Mio babbino caro” of Puccini, or popular love songs such as “Perfect” by Ed Sheerin, are well loved songs, but they are not for sacred use.

It can be a delicate pastoral issue to tell a bride and groom that their music choices are not suited to the liturgical celebration of their wedding. How does one

do this in a way as not to give offence, or alienate those who may not see the need for “church songs” in church? [Note the simple terminology used here, when liaising with couples who may not understand words such as “liturgical”, “ritual”, “ecclesial”!]

One simple way is to make sure to provide solutions to the dilemma and other options. For example, suggest secular songs might be more suitable played in the reception venue. Suggest that secular choices will sound more like what they expect, if played on CD or band at the reception venue. In any case, CDs and pre-recorded music in liturgy have no place. All liturgical worship is the offering of live liturgical ministers, integral to the rite and not merely ornamental fill-ins.

Explain that Church musicians are experienced at playing church songs, and know the liturgy, so as they can tailor the music to suit the ceremony, avoiding awkward silences, or playing songs at the wrong moment! The many well trained liturgical musicians in our church also need to be supported for their contribution in our church communities, not replaced by “canned” music, which is a cheap option when compared to the amount of money invested in other aspects of the wedding day.

Encourage bridal couples to engage such experienced church musicians, who are familiar with the liturgical music options and repertoire. Some couples are lured into engaging musicians who have no experience of Catholic church music, and who simply render Operatic arias, or pop songs more suited to cabaret or Broadway. Again, these musicians might have a place at the entertainment venue after the church ceremony.

Invite couples to a music demonstration, with a liturgical musician/s, say a cantor and accompanist, who can demonstrate some suitable choices, such as the parts of the Nuptial Mass which would normally be sung at Sunday Mass – e.g. the Alleluia, Holy Holy, Acclamations, Lamb of God, and a Communion Hymn. There are plenty of choices, such as “Where there is charity and love”, and “Ubi caritas”, or “A new commandment I give unto you”, amongst many more. The Church musician usually has other options (often simply instrumental) which are also suited to the entry and recessional of the bridal party.





Choosing to engage a cantor, in addition to the accompanist, e.g. organist or keyboard player, will also result in greater success of members of the congregation participating musically with confidence, especially when parts of well-known Mass settings and hymns are selected. Without a cantor or lead singer, the likelihood of a congregation singing without the lead is significantly reduced!

Even in Wedding Ceremonies (which have become more the norm than Nuptial Masses these days), allow for the inclusion of appropriate liturgical songs and acclamations throughout. For example, the revised “Order of Celebrating Matrimony, provides

for music after the Reception of the Consent, and suggests a suitable acclamation song may be inserted – consider something short like the refrain of a hymn “Glory and Praise to our God” or in Lent “Glory and Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ”. Also, after the Blessing and Giving of Rings, para 68 provides for “a hymn or canticle of praise may be sung by the whole community” – so a longer choice of hymn might work here e.g. Ode to Joy, or “God is love, let heaven adore him”, “Brother, sister, let me serve you”, amongst others.

Finally, for music ideas, don’t forget to consult the liturgical indexes of the catholic liturgical music resource books. Many hymnals

have indexes which suggest hymns, songs and psalms which are suitable for weddings. Here I commend the *Catholic Worship Book II* (published 2016) 2., the official Catholic music resource for Australia, which has an excellent list of music suggestions for weddings.

In my experience, guiding the wedding couple through the musical options, explaining why we use liturgical songs and music in worship, providing solutions and other options for the performance of music which are unsuited for the Catholic wedding, is usually appreciated and accepted by them, and takes us back to where we started.... “Everybody loves a wedding!”

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1. The Roman Ritual *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony* – English translation according to the Second Typical Edition- May 2015 (St. Pauls Publications) <http://www.stpauls.com.au>
2. *Catholic Worship Book II* . 2016 by Morning Star Publishing <https://morningstarpublishing.net.au/catholic-worship-book-ii/>



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