

# ORDER OF CELEBRATING MATRIMONY

## Theology of Matrimony

### *Introduction of OCM, Numbers 1 through 44*

#### I. Importance and Dignity of the Sacrament of Matrimony

1. The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish a life-long partnership between themselves, derives its force and strength from creation, but for the Christian faithful it is also raised up to a higher dignity, since it is numbered among the Sacraments of the new covenant.
2. A Marriage is established by the conjugal covenant, that is, the irrevocable consent of both spouses, by which they freely give themselves to each other and accept each other. Moreover, this singular union of a man and a woman requires, and the good of the children demands, the complete fidelity of the spouses and the indissoluble unity of the bond.
- 3 and 4: Children are the supreme gift of Marriage and contribute greatly to the good of the parents themselves. The intimate community of life and love between the spouses is holy and divine.
5. Christ, making a new creation and making all things new, has willed that Marriage be restored to its primordial form and holiness in such a way that what God has joined together, no one may put asunder.
- 6, 7, and 8: Sacrament of Matrimony celebrates Christ, the Bridegroom, loving his Bride, the Church. Commitment of spouses is based on the covenant love of Christ for his Bride, the Church.
9. The Holy Spirit assists Christian spouses to nurture and foster their union in equal dignity, mutual giving, and the undivided love that flows from the divine font of charity. Uniting in divine and human realities, they persevere in good times and bad, faithful in body and mind.
11. For God, who 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.

## II. Duties and Ministries

14. Pastors are responsible to give instruction on the meaning of Christian Marriage and the role of Christian spouses and parents through preaching, catechesis adapted to children, young people, and adults, and through means of social communication. Pastors of souls offer personal preparation for those preparing to enter Marriage so they are disposed to the holiness and duties of their new state. The couple is assisted to plan a fruitful liturgical celebration of Marriage so it is clear that the spouses participate in the mystery of the unity and fruitful love between Christ and his Church. Pastors are to offer assistance to those who are married, so that preserving the conjugal covenant, spouses daily come to lead a holier and fuller family life.
- 15 and 17. Sufficient time is required for preparation of Marriage. There is to be formal catechesis and preparation for the celebration of Matrimony.
18. Recipients of the Sacrament of Matrimony should be Confirmed. Recipients of the Sacrament of Matrimony should celebrate the Sacrament of Penance.
23. The same priest who prepared the couple should give the homily, receive the spouses' consent, and celebrate the Mass.

## III. Celebration of Matrimony

28. Marriage celebration possesses communitarian character.
29. Celebration of Sacrament of Matrimony must be diligently prepared with the engaged couple. The ideal is to have Marriage celebrated within Mass between two Catholics (certain circumstances could suggest a pastoral decision to celebrate outside Mass). The following should be chosen with engaged couple: readings from Sacred Scripture, form of expressing mutual consent, formularies for blessing of rings, Nuptial Blessing, intentions of the Universal Prayer, and the music. Options and local customs are to be given appropriate attention.
30. The Church allows for three distinct celebrations of Sacrament of Matrimony: the **Order of Celebrating Matrimony within Mass**; the **Order of Celebrating Matrimony without Mass**; and the **Order of Celebrating Matrimony between a Catholic and a Catechumen or a Non-Christian**.

## IV. Adaptations

41. b. Whenever Roman Ritual gives several optional formularies, it is permitted to add other formularies of the same kind.