

CHAPTER IV

THE ORDER OF CELEBRATING MATRIMONY BETWEEN A CATHOLIC AND A CATECHUMEN OR A NON-CHRISTIAN

152. When Marriage is contracted by a Catholic and a catechumen or a non-Christian, the celebration takes place in a church or in another suitable place, according to the following rite.

The order provided here is to be observed by a Priest or by a Deacon who has received delegation from the local Ordinary or the pastor to assist at the celebration of Marriages and to bless them in the name of the Church.

If Marriage is celebrated in the presence of an assisting layperson delegated for this purpose by the Diocesan Bishop, in accordance with the norm given in no. 25, the same order should be observed, with the changes necessary for the Nuptial Blessing. The assisting layperson wears attire appropriate to this ministry, or that which has been approved by the Bishop.

The Rite of Reception

153. At the appointed time, the one who presides, if a Priest or Deacon, wearing an alb and stole, and even a cope (or a dalmatic, for a Deacon) of the colour white or a festive colour, goes with the servers to the door of the church or to the place that has been chosen, where he receives the couple to be married and greets them kindly.

After this, the one who presides, the servers, the couple, the witnesses, and all present go to the seats prepared for each one.

154. Then, in these or similar words, the one who presides addresses them to dispose them inwardly for the celebration of Marriage:

N. and N., the Church shares your joy
and warmly welcomes you,
together with your families and friends,
as today you establish between yourselves
a lifelong partnership.

For believers God is the source of love and fidelity,
because God is love.

So let us listen attentively to his word,
and let us humbly pray to him,
that he may grant you your hearts' desire
and fulfil every one of your prayers.

155. If, however, circumstances so suggest, the Rite of Reception is omitted and the celebration of Marriage begins with the Liturgy of the Word.

The Liturgy of the Word

156. The Liturgy of the Word follows in the usual manner with texts taken from those provided above in no. 56 or with others from the readings indicated below (nos. 179-222). There may be one or two readings. If, however, circumstances make this more desirable, there may be only one reading. At least one reading that explicitly speaks of Marriage must always be chosen.

In the absence of a Priest or a Deacon, the Gospel reading is introduced in this way:

Listen, brothers and sisters,
to the words of the holy Gospel according to **N**.

157. After this, there should be a homily on the sacred text, which should be adapted to the responsibilities and situation of the couple and other circumstances. It is appropriate that an assisting layperson give an exhortation or read a homily indicated by the Bishop or the pastor.

The Celebration of Marriage

158. Then, with all standing, including the couple and the witnesses, who are positioned near them, the one who presides addresses the couple in these or similar words:

Dearly beloved,
you have come together here
before a minister of the Church
(before me, the delegate of the Bishop of the Church
to assist at this celebration,)
and in the presence of the community
so that your intention to enter into Marriage
may be strengthened by the Lord with a sacred seal,
and your love be enriched with his blessing,
so that you may have strength
to be faithful to each other for ever
and to assume all the responsibilities of married life.
And so, in the presence of the Church,
I ask you to state your intentions.

The Questions before the Consent

159. The one who presides then questions them about their freedom of choice, fidelity to each other, and the acceptance and upbringing of children, and each responds separately.

N. and N., have you come here to enter into Marriage without coercion, freely and wholeheartedly?

The bridegroom and bride each say:

I have.

The one who presides continues:

Are you prepared, as you follow the path of Marriage, to love and honour each other for as long as you both shall live?

The bridegroom and bride each say:

I am.

The following question may be omitted, if circumstances suggest this, for example if the couple are advanced in years.

Are you prepared to accept children lovingly from God and to bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?

The bridegroom and bride each say:

I am.

The Consent

160. The one who presides invites them to declare their consent:

Since it is your intention to enter the covenant
of Holy Matrimony,
declare your consent
before God and his Church.

First the one who presides asks the bridegroom, inserting the full names:

N. N., do you freely and willingly
take N. N. here present,
for your lawful wife
according to the laws of God
and of holy Mother Church?

The bridegroom answers:

I do.

Then the one who presides asks the bride, inserting the full names:

N. N., do you freely and willingly
take N. N. here present,
for your lawful husband
according to the laws of God
and of holy Mother Church?

The bride answers:

I do.

161. The one who presides then says to the bridegroom and bride:

N. and N., join your right hands.

The couple face each other, and the bridegroom takes the bride's right hand in his.

Form A

The bridegroom says (or repeats after the one who presides):

I, N. N.,
take you, N. N.,
for my lawful wife,
to have and to hold
from this day forward:
for better, for worse;
for richer, for poorer;
in sickness and in health;
to love and to cherish,
till death do us part.

The bride says (or repeats after the one who presides):

I, N. N.,
take you, N. N.,
for my lawful husband,
to have and to hold
from this day forward:
for better, for worse;
for richer, for poorer;
in sickness and in health;
to love and to cherish,
till death do us part.

Or:

Form B

The bridegroom says (or repeats after the one who presides):

I, **N.**, take you, **N.**, to be my wife.
I promise to be faithful to you,
in good times and in bad,
in sickness and in health,
to love you and to honour you
all the days of my life.

The bride says (or repeats after the one who presides):

I, **N.**, take you, **N.**, to be my husband.
I promise to be faithful to you,
in good times and in bad,
in sickness and in health,
to love you and to honour you
all the days of my life.

The Reception of the Consent

163. Then, receiving their consent, the one who presides says to the bride and bridegroom:

May the Lord in his kindness strengthen the consent
you have declared before the Church,
and graciously bring to fulfilment his blessing
within you.

What God joins together, let no one put asunder.

Or:

May the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac,
the God of Jacob,
the God who joined together our first parents in paradise,
strengthen and bless in Christ
the consent you have declared before the Church,
so that what God joins together,
no one may put asunder.

164. The one who presides invites all present to praise God:

Let us bless the Lord.

All reply:

Thanks be to God.

Another acclamation may be sung or said.

The Blessing and Giving of Rings

165. If circumstances so suggest, the blessing and giving of rings may be omitted. If they are included, however, the Priest (or Deacon), says:

May the Lord bless ✠ these rings,
which you will give to each other
as a sign of love and fidelity.

R. Amen.

Other formulas for blessing the rings, nos. 229-230.

Bless, O Lord, these rings, 229
which we bless ✠ in your name,
so that those who wear them
may remain entirely faithful to each other,
abide in peace and in your will,
and live always in mutual charity.
Through Christ our Lord.

Or:

Bless ✠ and sanctify your servants 230
in their love, O Lord,
and let these rings, a sign of their faithfulness,
remind them of their love for one another.
Through Christ our Lord.

166. An assisting layperson, with hands joined, says the same words, but the Sign of the Cross is omitted.

May the Lord bless these rings,
which you will give to each other
as a sign of love and fidelity.

R. Amen.

The one who presides sprinkles the rings, if appropriate, and gives them to the bride and bridegroom.

167. The husband places his wife's ring on her ring finger, saying, if appropriate:

N., receive this ring
as a sign of my love and fidelity.

If he is a Christian, he may add:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

The husband may also hand (gold and) silver to his wife, saying:

This (gold and) silver I give you,
tokens of all my worldly goods.

Likewise, the wife places her husband's ring on his ring finger, saying, if appropriate:

N., receive this ring
as a sign of my love and fidelity.

If she is a Christian, she may add:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

168. Then a hymn or canticle of praise may be sung by the whole community.

The Universal Prayer

169. After this, the Universal Prayer takes place (examples are provided in nos. 251-252).

170. After the invocations, the one who presides continues:

God the Father wills that his children be of one heart
in charity;
let those who are Christian call upon him
in the prayer of God's family,
which our Lord Jesus Christ has taught us:

And all the Christians continue:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

The Nuptial Blessing

171. As a rule, the Nuptial Blessing is said over the bride and bridegroom. Nevertheless, if circumstances suggest this, it may be omitted and, in this case, the prayer provided in no. 174 is said in place of the Nuptial Blessing.

The bride and bridegroom kneel at their place, if circumstances suggest this.

Then, the Priest (or Deacon) continues, with hands joined:

Now let us humbly invoke God's blessing
upon this bride and groom,
that in his kindness he may favour with his help
those on whom he has bestowed the bond of Marriage.

And all pray in silence for a while.

172. Then, the Priest (or Deacon), standing and turned towards the bride and bridegroom with hands extended over them, continues:

Holy Father, maker of the whole world,
who created man and woman in your own image
and willed that their union be crowned with your blessing,
we humbly beseech you for these your servants,
who are joined today in the Marriage covenant.

May your abundant blessing, Lord,
come down upon this bride, N.,
and upon N., her companion for life,
and may the power of your Holy Spirit
set their hearts aflame from on high,
so that, living out together the gift of Matrimony,
they may be known for the integrity of their conduct
(and be recognised as virtuous parents).

In happiness may they praise you, O Lord,
in sorrow may they seek you out;
may they have the joy of your presence
to assist them in their toil,
and know that you are near
to comfort them in their need;
and after a happy old age,
together with the circle of friends that surrounds them,
may they come to the Kingdom of Heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

173. *If an assisting layperson presides, he or she says, with hands joined:*

Blessed are you, Lord God,
creator and sustainer of the human race,
who in the union of husband and wife
have left a true image of your love.
May your abundant blessing, Lord,
come down upon this bride, **N.**,
and upon **N.**, her companion for life,
and may the power of your Holy Spirit
set their hearts aflame from on high,
so that, living out together the gift of Matrimony,
they may be known for the integrity of their conduct
(and be recognised as virtuous parents).

In happiness may they praise you, O Lord,
in sorrow may they seek you out;
may they have the joy of your presence
to assist them in their toil,
and know that you are near
to comfort them in their need;
and after a happy old age,
together with the circle of friends that surrounds them,
may they come to the Kingdom of Heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

174. *If, because of circumstances, the Nuptial Blessing is omitted, this prayer is spoken over the bride and bridegroom:*

Be attentive to our prayers, O Lord,
and in your kindness uphold
what you have established for the increase
of the human race,
so that the union you have created
may be kept safe by your assistance.
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

The Conclusion of the Celebration

175. Then, the Priest (or Deacon) blesses the people, saying:

May almighty God bless all of you,
who are gathered here,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.
R. Amen.

176. If, however, an assisting layperson presides, he or she may conclude the rite by signing himself or herself with the Sign of the Cross while saying:

May God fill us with joy and hope in believing.
May the peace of Christ reign in our hearts.
May the Holy Spirit pour out his gifts upon us.

All reply:

Amen.

177. It is a praiseworthy practice to end the celebration with a suitable chant.

178. When the celebration is concluded, the witnesses and the one who presides sign the Marriage record. The signing may take place either in the vesting room or in the presence of the people; however, it is not to be done on the altar.