Celebrating Marriage II

national bulletin on Liturgy

Celebrating Marriage II
National Bulletin on Liturgy
A review published by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

This bulletin is primarily pastoral in scope. It is prepared for members of parish liturgy committees, readers, musicians, singers, catechists, teachers, religious, seminarians, clergy, diocesan liturgical commissions, and for all who are involved in preparing, celebrating, and improving the community’s life of worship and prayer.

Editorial commentary in the bulletin is the responsibility of the editor.

Editor:
Zita E. Maier, OSU

Editorial Office:
NATIONAL LITURGY OFFICE
90 Parent Avenue (613) 241-9461
Ottawa, Ontario extension 276
K1N 7B1
Web Site: http://www.cccb.ca
E-mail: liturgy@cccb.ca

Business Office:
NOVALIS
P.O. Box 990
Ville Mont-Royal, Quebec
H3P 3M8
1-800-NOVALIS (668-2547)

Subscriptions
For one year, excluding 7% GST:
1-4 copies:
Canada $17.00
United States $20.00 US
Other countries $27.00 US

Five or more copies:
Canada $15.00
United States $18.00 US
Other countries $25.00 US

Quantity discount for this issue:
For 50 or more copies to one address, 30% discount.

The price of a single issue is now $5.50. Individual copies and back issues must be purchased from the publisher. Customers should add to the price the GST (7%) after adding one of the following amounts for shipping and handling:
For orders of $99.99 and less: 8% ($2.00 minimum charge)
$100.00 to $999.99: 5%
$1,000.00 and more: shipping costs only

National Bulletin on Liturgy is published by Publications Service of the CCCB and appears in spring, summer, fall and winter.

National Bulletin on Liturgy,
Copyright © Conccacan Inc., 1998.
All rights reserved.

No part of this bulletin may be reproduced in any form without the prior written permission of CCCB Publications Service.

International Standard Serial Number: ISSN 0084-8425
Legal deposit: National Library, Ottawa, Canada
Second Class Mail: Registration Number 2994.
Contents

Introduction ............................................................................................... 195

Proposed Order of Christian Marriage ............................................. Frank Henderson 197

Celebration of Marriage: Overview .................................................... 200

Theology of Marriage ........................................................................ 201

The Wedding Liturgy ........................................................................ 208

A Catechumenal Approach ................................................................ 215

The Four Periods .............................................................................. 217

The Three Steps and Their Liturgies .................................................. 221

Liturgies Within the Four Periods ..................................................... 227

Liturgies for Married Life ................................................................. 230

Conclusion .......................................................................................... 232

Music in the Wedding Liturgy .............................................................. 233

Liturgical Ministry, Faith, and Discernment ...................................... Mary M. Schaefer 242

On a Journey Towards the Father's House .......................................... 246

Prayer of Pope John Paul II for the Third Year of Preparation for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 ......................... 249

Index to Volume 31 ........................................................................ 251

A Brief Book Review ......................................................................... 256

NBL Editor News

Sr. Zita Maier, OSU, who has served as editor of the National Bulletin on Liturgy for the past two years, has been elected to the leadership team of her community—Ursulines of Bruno, Saskatchewan—and has returned to the West. She will also be working as associate editor of the Prairie Messenger. The Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and the National Liturgy Office wish to thank Sr. Zita for her two years of service at the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Bulletin.

Miss Margaret Bick will become editor of the National Bulletin with the next issue. Margaret has an M.A. in liturgy from the University of Notre Dame. She is presently serving the Metro Separate School Board (Toronto) as Religious Education and Family Life Education resource teacher (consultant), a position which she will continue to hold half time. Margaret is an active member of the Ontario Liturgical Conference and has frequently written articles, offered workshops and given courses in the field of liturgy.
Christian marriage, that is, the marriage of two persons who have been baptized in Christ, is a sign of Christ’s victory on the cross, a gift which is forever. It is seen as a sign of Christ’s love for the Church, and as Christ loved the Church and freely gave his life and rose to give it life, so too do the bride and groom give themselves in love.

However, the reality that those involved in pastoral ministry are more often than not confronted with is a view of marriage that has no such “holy” dimensions. Many couples see their wedding totally in the materialistic and media-driven culture of today and do not see it in the context of their baptismal life.

Yet the Church continues to celebrate marriage in the context of word and sacrament, and following the Second Vatican Council this ritual as well as other rites was “to be revised and enriched in such a way that it more clearly signifies the grace of the sacrament ...” (Sacrosanctum Concilium, no. 77). The Rite for Marriage (1969) was one of the first to be revised after the council. Now, as part of the revision of rites that is on-going, a second editio typica has been published (1990) by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. As the International Committee on English in the Liturgy prepared its translation, various conferences of bishops began work on preparing the rite for their countries.

In Canada, the committee appointed by the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy offered a proposal for a revision of the rite that does more than celebrate in a single liturgy the sacrament of marriage: it is an “order,” a journey culminating in the wedding liturgy, a journey which is celebrated with various rites as is the “order” offered by the Church for initiating adults in the Catholic community. And just as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults does not end with the sacraments of initiation but follows these with a period of mystagogy, the celebration of marriage continues after the wedding by celebrating anniversaries and offering, for example, a blessing of the home. In this view marriage would be seen as a process of different periods or stages: a period of preparation, a period of celebration and a period of reflection on and living marriage.

The rationale for offering a “marriage catechumenate” (that is, a process of preparation) to celebrate this sacrament and an overview are given in this issue. It is offered as an ideal, not as a “must” for every couple that requests marriage in the Church. As noted in the conclusion, it took some time for the RCIA to become established; this “order” too will need time. No doubt the challenges to the parish community to help couples prepare for marriage will be as great as ever.

One area in which the approach to marriage as a secular event is most affected is that of music. To assist couples and those who are involved in the music ministry, some guidelines and suggestions for selections—and these are only suggestions—are provided.
The Canadian liturgical book, *Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes* (1979), has been in use in English Canada for almost 20 years; it has served the Church well. It is now time, however, to think about the next-generation ritual book for marriage.

In 1993, the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy initiated a process which will lead to a new ritual for marriage. One reason for doing so was entirely practical: only a small number of copies of *Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes* were then in stock, and these have now been sold. More significantly, the Vatican issued a second edition of the Latin *Ordo Matrimonium* in 1990, with the addition of pastoral notes, a substantially improved Introduction, additional readings and some changes in the rites and texts themselves. A partial English translation of this became available in 1992.

The 1990 Roman revision of the *editio typica* meant that the bishops of Canada could not simply reprint the 1979 ritual of marriage. Publication of a new ritual book would also be an opportunity to take advantage of 20 years of pastoral experience and theological reflection, as well as to learn from other versions of the liturgy of marriage (including that of French Canada) and those of the ecumenical community.

**Process**

The Episcopal Commission for Liturgy appointed a committee to prepare a proposed new liturgy of marriage for consideration by the bishops; in order to facilitate communication and minimize travel costs, all those appointed were from Western Canada (actually all lived in Alberta). This drafting committee consisted of Kim Aldi Wanner (Edmonton), Bill Corcoran (Calgary), and Frank Henderson (Edmonton); Bishop Blaise Morand (Prince Albert, Sask.) served as liaison with the commission.

The Introduction to the 1969 *Marriage Ritual*, as well as the second revised edition, issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship give great latitude to each episcopal conference to draw up its own marriage rite suited to the usages of the place.

The committee had a number of sources of information and guidance available to it: the pastoral experiences of its members; knowledge of published studies and reflections on marriage and its liturgy, including a previous Canadian study of this rite; Roman Catholic ritual books for marriage from French Canada and other countries, and marriage liturgies of other churches and ecumenical bodies. In addition, a number of persons in Canada served as consultants on various aspects of the project: married couples, pastors, liturgical experts, and experts on interchurch and interfaith matters and on canon law.

The drafting committee took into account contemporary theological understandings of marriage and of the wedding liturgy; it

---


Frank Henderson is a former editor of the National Bulletin on Liturgy and member of the committee that drafted the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage. He lives in Edmonton, Alberta.
decided which individual rites to celebrate, their internal structure and content, and their relationships; it made every effort to make the new ritual book easy to use. Particularly important models and sources included the above-mentioned Canadian marriage ritual, the 1990 Roman revision, and the new proposed Order of Christian Marriage of the Episcopal Conference of England and Wales.

All texts provided by the 1990 Roman revision will be included in the new ritual book. Additional options were provided by borrowing some texts from other sources (with and without adaptation), by composing some new texts, or (in a few cases) commissioning other persons to write new texts. Rubrics and titles were worded with great care. In addition to verbal elements, careful attention was paid to the musical and nonverbal dimensions of the rites. Finally, a new general introduction was written to complement the new Roman introduction, and extensive pastoral notes were prepared and put in place throughout the book.

In February 1997, after three years of study and work, the drafting committee submitted a 400-page (single-spaced) manuscript of the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage to the Episcopal Commission on Liturgy.

For a period of one year, parts of this proposed order will be tested and evaluated in twenty parishes across the country; the commission will then see what changes and adaptations need to be made in light of the parish evaluations. In due course, the commission will submit its proposal to all the English-sector bishops for a vote. If accepted by the bishops as a whole, it will go to Rome for confirmation. The final stage will be to enter the publication process, which itself takes some months. It will be several years, therefore, before any new liturgy of marriage is available for general use; it will be a book for the new millennium!

To help the Church in Canada prepare for a new Order of Christian Marriage, the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy has asked that it be described in this issue of the bulletin.

A Catechumenal Approach

In addition to improving the wedding liturgy itself, the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage contains rites for the periods preceding and following the wedding. At first, the drafting committee was much influenced by the example of the proposed Order of Christian Marriage of England and Wales. This ritual contains several liturgies on or near the occasion of engagement and during the period of engagement, as well as "domestic rites" for use by the newly married couple. Although the rites are fine liturgies, they are not integrated or brought into unity.

Upon further reflection, therefore, the committee took a significantly different approach. Instead of merely offering several liturgies before and after the wedding liturgy, the entire experience of getting married was seen as an extended liturgical process or Ordo; this has a flow and a unity as a whole as well as including a number of distinctive moments. In other words, the committee adopted the catechumenal approach of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Once this decision was made, the committee focused on modeling the entire ritual of marriage and its liturgical book on that of the RCIA. In addition, the overall liturgy of marriage was viewed as an integral process with four periods and three stages, as in the RCIA. All this will be described in greater detail below.

Structure and Presentation

As already indicated, the structure of the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage is closely modeled on that of the liturgical book Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Thus the contents of the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage will contain rites and prayers for the following periods and steps:
Proposed Order of Christian Marriage • Frank Henderson

Period of Christian Nurturing

First Step: Entry into the Order of the Engaged
- Celebration of Engagement in the Home
- Entry into the Order of the Engaged

Period of Engagement
- Celebrations of the Word and Marriage Preparation
- Liturgies of Conversion and Healing
- Blessings of Engaged Couples
- Blessing of Food and Drink in the Home
- Prayers during a Retreat

Second Step: Call to the Vocation of Christian Marriage

Period of Formation for Christian Marriage
- Celebrations of the Word and Preparation for the Wedding Liturgy
- Blessing of Sons and Daughters
- Reconciliation before the Wedding
- Prayers for the Rehearsal and Rehearsal Supper

Third Step: Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage
- Wedding within Mass
- Wedding within a Liturgy of the Word
- Wedding of A Catholic and an Unbaptized Person
- Blessing for a Wedding Banquet

Period of Reflection on the Vocation of Christian Marriage
- Blessing of the Home
- Table Prayers and Blessings
- Celebrating an Anniversary in the Home or Church
- Celebrating Renewal
- Blessing for a Family or Household

The Proposed Order of Christian Marriage will also take into account the diverse circumstances that pastors and parish workers encounter in the various periods and steps of preparation, celebration and reflection. These include some of the following:
- Latin and Eastern Catholics
- Catholic and Orthodox Christians
- Interchurch Weddings: A Catholic and an Anglican or Protestant Christian (Ecumenical Liturgy)
- Interfaith Weddings: A Catholic and a Member of Another Faith
- A Catholic and an Unbeliever
- Aboriginal Persons
- Bilingual Liturgies: English and French Catholics
- Elderly Persons
- Persons with Disabilities
- Persons Whose Children are Present
- Catholics Who Do Not Participate in the Public Life of the Church
- Persons Who Have Lived Together or Whose Previous Marriage Was Not Recognized by the Church
- A Catholic and a Catechumen, or Two Catechumens

The ritual will also contain additional texts, such as
- Prayer of the Couples
- Prayer of Parents and Families
- Model General Intercessions
- Prayers from Other Traditions

The layout, format and appearance of the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage is modeled on recent ICEL translations in their Canadian versions, especially the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (1985) and the Order of Christian Funerals (1990). For example, pastoral notes are in place throughout the book, and each liturgy is preceded by an outline of its contents.
The drafting committee hopes that there will be different editions of this ritual book. One would, of course, be a complete edition. A smaller and less expensive study edition would contain portions that might be used in the home. In addition, a pamphlet would be prepared for musicians. Finally, a booklet would help couples and pastoral ministers prepare for individual weddings.

Terminology
Efforts were made to keep terminology clear, consistent, descriptive and positive. For example, the proposed ritual book uses the terms "within Mass" and "within a liturgy of the word" both for the wedding and some other liturgies. It follows the Order of Christian Funerals in using "presiding minister" as a general term to include priest, deacon and lay presider, unless there is a need to be more specific. It uses "wedding" for the entire liturgy, and "liturgy of marriage" for the rite of the marriage itself, corresponding to "liturgy of the word" and "liturgy of the eucharist." It uses "Order" in the title to indicate a number of liturgies having to do with the same need and situation. It uses "groom" rather than "bridegroom" and "engagement" rather than "betrothal" to reflect more common Canadian usage.

The central focus of the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage is, of course, the wedding liturgy, or more formally, the celebration of the sacrament of marriage. This is provided in two forms:
• Wedding within Mass
• Wedding within a Liturgy of the Word

A rich source of information is found in the Introductions and Pastoral Notes that accompany each ritual book.

The second edition of the Roman texts provided an expanded Introduction (pastoral notes). These are complemented by pastoral notes for use in Canada. These are contained in all of the ritual books issued by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. It is in the Introductions and pastoral notes that the significance of the rites are highlighted. It is these notes that provide those involved in any form of marriage preparation and celebration with the spirit of the Church's thinking and theology on marriage that is then reflected in the rites, symbols, texts and gestures of the liturgy. These rites open up for the Christian community the richness of the marriage liturgies and express our common understanding of marriage in the context of faith, that is, God's covenant with the human race.

There are three sources for the general principles of celebrating weddings:

• Ordo Celebrandi Matrimonium, 1990: The Introduction to the Roman edition of the marriage rite contains the following major sections:
  Importance and Dignity of the Sacrament of Marriage
  Offices and Ministries
  Celebration of Marriage
  Preparation
  Rite to Be Used
  Adaptations
• Order of Christian Marriage: The General Introduction of the Canadian edition of the marriage rite will deal with the following topics:
  - Structure of Christian Marriage
  - Paschal Mystery and Trinitarian Life
  - Celebration of Christ and the Church Ministries
  - Marriage in Canada
  - Time of Christian Marriage
  - Places of Christian Marriage
  - Choice of Liturgy
  - Terminology
  - Adaptation by the Minister

• The Pastoral Notes which accompany any ritual book are designed to assist the liturgical ministers. They bring together items from different sources or documents, reorder topics for easy reference, and offer suggestions for celebration. The following are some of the topics found in the notes.
  - The Wedding Liturgy
    - Symbol
    - Environment
    - Speech and Silence
    - Music

The pastoral notes will also consider in turn each element or part of the wedding liturgy. In addition, they will consider the special circumstances that may affect the wedding liturgy in certain cases. These include
  - Adaptations for Particular Persons
  - Interchurch Weddings
  - Interfaith Weddings
  - Weddings of Catholics and Unbaptized Persons or Persons With No Religion

---

Theology of Marriage

The following reflections are based upon the new Roman and Canadian introductions and notes and provide a solid, if condensed, presentation of the Church’s view of marriage.

Importance and Dignity of the Sacrament of Marriage
The marriage covenant by which a man and a woman establish a life-long bond with each other derives its force and strength from creation, but for Christians it is also raised up to a higher dignity because it is counted among the sacraments of the new covenant. A marriage is established by the marriage covenant, the irrevocable consent that the spouses freely give to and receive from each other. This unique union of man and woman and the good of the children impose total fidelity on each of them and the unbreakable unity of their bond.
By their very nature, the institution of marriage and wedding love have as their purpose the procreation and education of children and find in them their ultimate crown. Children are the most precious gift of a marriage and contribute most to the well-being of the parents.

The intimate communion of life and love by which the spouses are “no longer two, but one flesh,” was established by the Creator, endowed with its own laws, and given as the one blessing that was not forfeited by original sin. This sacred bond is therefore based on a human decision, but on the author of marriage, who willed that it be possessed of special blessings and purposes.

But Christ the Lord, who makes a new creation and makes all things new, chose to restore marriage to its primordial form and holiness in such a way that what God has joined, no one may separate; and to make the indissoluble marriage covenant a clearer sign of this full meaning and a surer help in its fulfilment, he raised it to the dignity of a sacrament, modeled on his own nuptial bond with the Church.

By his presence Christ brought blessings and joy to the wedding at Cana, where he changed water into wine and so signaled the coming of the hour of the new and everlasting covenant. “As once God went to meet his people with a covenant of love and fidelity, so now the Saviour of the human race” offers himself as the bridegroom of the Church, accomplishing the covenant with it in his paschal mystery.

By reason of baptism, the sacrament of faith, a man and a woman are once for all brought into the covenant between Christ and the Church, so that their marital communion is assumed into Christ’s own love and is enriched by the power of his sacrifice. Because of this new condition, a valid marriage between the baptized is always a sacrament.

In virtue of the sacrament of marriage, married Christians signify and share in the mystery of the unity and fruitful love that exists between Christ and his Church; they thus help each other attain holiness in their married life and in welcoming and rearing children, and they have their own special place and gift among the people of God.

Through this sacrament the Holy Spirit brings it about that the spouses follow the example of Christ, who loved the Church and gave himself for his bride. So too as Christian spouses they are to strive to nurture and foster their marriage in an equal dignity, with undivided love that flows from the divine font of charity, in order that, joining the divine and the human, they may continue with unwavering fidelity in good times and bad, shunning all adultery and divorce.

Without detracting from the other ends of marriage, the genuine development of conjugal love and the whole rationale of familial life have as their purpose that married Christians should be steadfast and ready to cooperate with the love of the Creator and Saviour, who through them will constantly enrich and enlarge his own family. Trusting in divine providence and developing a spirit of sacrifice, they thus give glory to the Creator and strive for perfection in Christ, as they fulfill their generous office of procreation, their human and Christian responsibility.

For the God who calls husband and wife to marriage calls them also to make progress in it. Those who marry in Christ are empowered to celebrate effectively with faith in God’s word the mystery of Christ and the Church, to live rightly, and to bear witness in the eyes of all. A marriage embraced, prepared for, celebrated, and lived out daily in the light of faith is the marriage that “the Church arranges, the sacrifice strengthens, upon which the blessing sets a seal, at which angels are present as witnesses, and to which the Father gives his consent…. Two are one in hope, … one in the religion they practice. They are brother and sister, both servants of the
same Master; nothing divides them, either in flesh or in spirit. They are, in very truth, two in one flesh; and where there is but one flesh, there is also but one spirit."

**Paschal Mystery and Trinitarian Life**

Marriage is a gift of God, which God gives freely and which spouses freely accept. This gift is God’s own friendship and empowerment to live God’s own life. Couples respond in thankful prayer and lives of gratitude and blessing.

Marriage is a participation in the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. In their mutual and self-giving love, the spouses live his cross and his resurrection. In their fidelity and mutual trust, they continually die to selfishness and rise to new beginnings; they embody and witness to the totally faithful love that Christ has for us all.

Marriage is a transformative experience of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit raises up the spouses to grow in mutual self-giving and the capacity to express their life-giving love. In the power of the Spirit their love becomes fruitful within and beyond the family.

Marriage is a particular vocation in the Church. It is a way in which the baptismal life is lived out; it is an experience of communion with and in the Body of Christ; it is a form of Christ-like ministry in and beyond the Church; it is a way of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ for the sake of the world; it builds up the Church through children and ministry.

Marriage is a sign of God’s reign. In their free, faithful and fruitful mutual love, spouses witness to the type of relationship that God intends for all of humanity and anticipates the day when such love is experienced by all people.

Marriage is participation in the life of the Trinity. The married couple are called to mirror the life of the Trinity itself. God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is a community of persons who relate to each other in perfect love. By the fruitfulness of their love, which (God willing) leads to children, the married couple witness to the life-giving nature of God's love and participate with God as co-creators in the world.

Beyond their home, spouses will extend God’s love by lives of charity, peace and justice.

Marriage is closely related to eucharist, which likewise is a gift of God’s love, a celebration of Christ’s paschal mystery, an experience of the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, communion in the Body of Christ, and anticipation of God’s reign. Spouses are called to participate fully, consciously and actively in the eucharistic celebrations of the Church. It is in the regular celebration of the eucharist that the married couple will find their continued nourishment and strength throughout their married life.

**Celebration of Christ and the Church**

The Order of Christian Marriage, like all liturgies of the Church, is an action of Christ and the people of God. It is an action of the bride and groom and their families and friends, and also an action of the local Church community. It is especially and most profoundly an action of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, leading a transformed humanity into fuller life in the Holy Trinity.

Throughout history God’s relationship with God’s chosen people is described as a covenant of love. The relationship of husband and wife is also a covenant of love, entered into through the covenant shared between the spouses in the wedding liturgy. At his Last Supper Jesus Christ poured out his life to establish a new covenant with those he called his own. Today women and men first enter into Christ’s covenant in baptism and the other sacraments of Christian initiation: confirmation and eucharist. In marriage they enter into this covenant more deeply and in a particular way.
Theology of Marriage

Jesus Christ is really present in the Order of Christian Marriage; in the assembly, in the word of God, in the couple and presiding minister, in the consecrated bread and wine when eucharist is celebrated, in the paschal mystery which is experienced anew. The Holy Spirit is poured out in Christian marriage to sanctify and transform the relationship between woman and man and among all who participate. In Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit bride and groom and the entire local Church assembly enter more deeply and fully into the mystery of God’s love.

In Christian marriage the love of the spouses is celebrated joyfully by the Church, in the Church and for the Church. The faith of the individuals being celebrated is the faith of the Church, an anticipation of Christ’s faith in God, his loving Father. And the rites by which marriage is celebrated are the responsibility of the Church and all its members.

Symbol

In the wedding liturgy, symbols as well as words express the belief that marriage is a life-long covenant of love between man and woman in which partners give themselves and receive each other. The central symbolic persons in the wedding liturgy are the bride and groom who are the ministers of the sacrament; the central symbolic action is their joining of hands.

The mutuality of their self-giving and receiving of the other, and the freedom of each partner in entering into the covenant of marriage, is shown by the manner in which the joining of hands is carried out. One partner takes the initiative in taking the hand of the other as he or she speaks the vows. They then loose hands. Then the other partner takes the initiative in taking the other’s hand as he or she speaks the vows.

Additional symbols expand on and extend the meaning and power of the central symbols. However, secondary elements should not become unduly prominent in comparison to the primary symbols. Rings are blessed and exchanged as signs of fidelity and unity, the paschal candle may shed the light of Christ on the joining of hands and exchange of vows, the couple kiss each other, and gifts from the community (an option) show its love for the couples.

Environment

As a sign of baptismal identity and symbol of the paschal mystery, the paschal candle may be positioned near the place where the vows are to be exchanged and lit before the liturgy begins.

At weddings, beauty is found especially in the people who are present: bride and groom, families, attendants, presiding minister and other ministers, friends, community members. Beauty does not primarily involve their dress but rather their persons, their joy, and their active participation in the celebration. Furthermore, the church building itself should be worthy and beautiful.

Speech and Silence

The central verbal element of the liturgy of marriage is the vows that are exchanged between bride and groom. In these words they minister the covenant of marriage to each other, speaking their love and promising their life-long fidelity. The vows and the joining of hands go together. Thus the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage offers several versions of the vows that express the marriage commitment in slightly different ways.

The nuptial blessing is the second most important text, after the vows. It is also the principal prayer of the presiding minister. The many texts speak of the nature of marriage, tell the story of marriage in salvation history, ask God’s blessings on the couple, invoke the Holy Spirit upon them, and look forward to the hopes and struggles of their future life together.

Music

The pastoral notes pay close attention to the musical nature of the wedding liturgy. They address music in general and music
ministers, the challenges and opportunities regarding participation and ways of fostering full participation in particular.

The focus of a wedding liturgy, like all liturgies of the Church, is first of all the worship of God. Music is an essential element of Christian worship and is therefore an integral part of all liturgies. Music in the wedding liturgy enables those gathered to express their faith and the worship of God for the mystery of the love that God has created and transformed through this sacrament. It creates an atmosphere of celebration, joy, and unity within the gathered assembly.

The ritual elements of the marriage celebration are enhanced and sustained by the appropriate choice of hymns, psalms, acclamations and instrumental music. The same principles used in choosing music for any liturgical celebration of the Church apply to the wedding celebration. The music chosen must both support the ritual of marriage and enable the full, active, conscious and fruitful participation of the Christian community, gathered to witness and seek God's blessing on this marriage. The words of the musical selections should express the community's relationship with God.

Participation
Full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy is a basic principle enunciated by the Second Vatican Council. Such participation is a right and a responsibility of all members of the Church, based on their baptism. This principle applies as much to the wedding liturgies as to any other liturgy. Participation includes what members of the liturgical assembly do, say and sing; it also implies their internal appropriation of the meanings of these actions. It means as well that people enter into communion with others by worshipping together and enter into communion with them by living out the meaning of their corporate worship: for example, by serving the poor. By participating in these acts of communion in worship and ministry, all embody the Church and enter into communion with God.

Ministry
The pastoral notes also consider the ministry of the assembly, the couple, sponsors, the bishop, priests, deacons, lay pastoral ministers and catechists. It reminds all that the assembly is the primary minister of the wedding liturgy as a whole. In addition, a number of specific ministries contribute, each in their own way. Therefore, the wedding liturgy needs to express clearly that the ministers of the sacrament of marriage are the bride and groom. In the midst of the gathered assembly, they witness to and celebrate their love, shared Christian faith and new joint discipleship as a married couple.

The presiding minister has several roles: to witness the marriage and be sure that the requirements both of canon law and civil law are met, preside over the liturgy, preach, facilitate the ministry of the assembly and other liturgical ministers, and assist the bride and groom in their role as ministers of the sacrament.

Choice of Liturgy
Couples and pastoral ministers need to decide which of the two forms of the wedding liturgy is most appropriate: the wedding within Mass or the wedding within a liturgy of the word. This can become a difficult issue, and the criteria to be employed in making their choice are not always clear, consistently employed, or generally agreed upon by the parties concerned.

In the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage the fundamental principle of Vatican II's Constitution on the Liturgy is applied to this matter: full participation. The form of the wedding liturgy is to be chosen which best corresponds to the capacity of the couple to participate fully, consciously and actively, taking into account the participation of the families and assembly.

The presiding minister or other pastoral minister should guide the couple in their
choice of wedding liturgy: a wedding during Mass or a wedding during a liturgy of the word. If both spouses and most of their relatives and guests are able to participate fully, actively and consciously in the Catholic eucharistic liturgy, then it will be appropriate to celebrate the wedding within Mass. If one or both spouses, or the greater number of relatives and guests, are not able to participate fully in the Mass, then the wedding within a liturgy of the word will be more appropriate. It may be helpful for the minister to explain to the couple and family that a wedding within a liturgy of the word is a full Catholic liturgy. Non-Catholic Christians and others unfamiliar with Catholic worship will be able to participate more fully in this liturgy than in the eucharist.

Adaptations for Particular Persons

Another section of the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage, “Particular Circumstances,” considers the needs of particular persons. Some weddings require further consideration. These weddings may call for special sensitivity to the persons involved, or adaptations beyond what has already been considered, or simply further discussion. These particular circumstances are dealt with here primarily through additional notes.

Latin and Eastern Catholics

If a Latin Catholic and a member of an Eastern Catholic Church wish to marry, the rights of the Eastern Catholic and his or her Church need to be carefully respected. Such marriages may take place in the parish of either party; this decision is guided by provisions of canon law.

Aboriginal Persons

Aboriginal couples are encouraged to incorporate their own cultural expressions into the wedding liturgy in ways that are appropriate. These may include the arrangement and decoration of space, dress, music, posture, gesture and movement. Because of the large number of native cultures in Canada, local adaptation is both necessary and appropriate.

English and French Catholics

Weddings of Catholic couples who represent the English and French cultures of Canada may suitably express both cultures and use both languages.

Deaf Persons

Deaf persons have a right to exchange their vows using American Sign Language or another system of signs, and a qualified translator should be present to facilitate the exchange of vows and demonstrate to the official witnesses and the entire assembly that this has been accomplished. Civil law also usually requires the presence of a translator; basic texts have been adapted to correspond to the use of American Sign Language.

Elderly Persons

An elderly couple entering marriage should be treated with dignity and respect; a model prayer of families and friends is included.

Persons with Disabilities

The marriage of persons with disabilities requires special care and sensitivity; such persons should be treated with special respect and consideration. The full range of conditions and situations described as disabilities needs to be recognized, and each person should be considered as an individual; the focus is primarily on the person, not the disabling condition.

Persons Whose Children are Present

Children of one or both spouses (from a previous marriage) may be present at some weddings. The marriage will mark the beginning of a new family relationship for the children as well as for the spouses; they will acquire a new parent and perhaps new siblings. The welfare of the children needs to be considered, and they may need help in preparing and accepting this new situation. The needs of young children, adolescents and adult children will vary. A model affirmation by the children of the spouses will be included in the ritual book.
Catholics Who Do Not Participate in the Public Life of the Church

This common but sometimes difficult situation will be dealt with at length, guided by the principle of full participation. Some individuals or couples who approach marriage are initiated (or at least baptized) but do not participate in the public life of the Church. Some may be conscious of their Christian faith but express this only in their private lives. Others may show no sign of living out their baptismal covenant. In some cases they will be seeking a wedding in church for social or traditional reasons, because of family expectations, or because of church law. Nevertheless, these persons are to be respected as baptized persons and members of the people of God. They should be assured of the loving concern of the Church and made to feel welcome.

Such couples may be unfamiliar with the Catholic liturgy. Such unfamiliarity may include inability to undertake that full, active, conscious and fruitful participation to which all the baptized are called and desires in its liturgical celebrations. Accordingly, in preparing for marriage the couple needs to be helped to participate as fully as they are able. At the same time, the liturgy may need to be adapted – within limits – to their ability to participate.

Persons Who Have Lived Together or Whose Previous Marriage Was Not Recognized by the Church

This descriptive phrase is used instead of the canonical term, convalidation. Two situations are considered here: (a) couples who have never exchanged vows in a public forum but who have been living together for some time, and (b) couples who have exchanged vows before civil authorities or in another church and whose marriage has not been recognized by the Catholic Church. An adapted affirmation by families and assembly will be included in the ritual book.

Interchurch Marriages

Another special—and not uncommon—need is the marriage of a Catholic and a member of another Church. The new liturgical book devotes considerable attention to this matter.

A Catholic and an Eastern Orthodox or Oriental Orthodox Christian

Eastern Christian churches include a large number of Orthodox churches and a smaller number of Oriental churches. Though they take similar positions regarding the meaning of marriage and its sacramentality, their liturgical rites vary somewhat. The individual character and discipline of each Eastern church should be respected.

The Roman Catholic Church recognizes the validity of the marriage of an Orthodox and a Roman Catholic performed by an Orthodox priest, if a proper dispensation from canonical form has been secured.

A Catholic and an Anglican or Protestant Christian

It is important to show respect to the baptized status of Anglican and Protestant partners in marriage and to the faith, beliefs and religious practices of their church. Pastors and the Catholic community should extend a loving and friendly welcome to them. Weddings of a Catholic and an Anglican or Protestant Christian usually will take place in the parish church of the Catholic partner with the Catholic minister presiding; the liturgy will usually be a wedding within a liturgy of the word. In this case it is highly desirable that the minister of the Anglican or Protestant partner’s community be present and take some part in the wedding liturgy.

With the permission of the Catholic bishop, the wedding may take place in the church of the Anglican or Protestant partner, with the Anglican or Protestant minister presiding. This permission is called dispensation from canonical form.

Weddings of Catholics and Unbaptized Persons

This includes the marriage of a Catholic and a catechumen; because catechumens
are within the embrace of the Church though not yet baptized, the marriage of 
two catechumens is considered as well.

A Catholic and a Catechumen, or 
Two Catechumens

Special adaptations need to be made when a Catholic marries a catechumen or when 
two catechumens marry, and these two situa-
tions need to be distinguished from each 
other. Anything which would equate a 
catechumen with a person already bap-
tized is to be avoided.

A Catholic and a Member of Another Faith

Pastoral notes are offered as guidelines for 
weddings between a baptized Catholic and 
a member of another faith, such as a Jew, a 
Muslim or a Buddhist. In accordance with 
the teaching of the Second Vatican 
Council, the Church rejects nothing 
which is true and holy in other religions 
and desires dialogue and collaboration 
with members of other religions. It is not 
the purpose of the notes or the wedding 
liturgy to promote marriages between 
Catholics and members of other faiths. 
Rather, they presume couples who have 
already formed a firm purpose of marriage, 
and are intended to help ministers of the 
Church respond with pastoral sensitivity 
to such couples.

A Catholic and an Unbeliever

These pastoral notes pertain to the mar-
riage of a Catholic and someone with no 
religious beliefs. It is important to respect 
the baptized status of the Catholic partner 
and the outlook of the partner who is an 
unbeliever. Ministers and the community 
of God's people should show a loving and 
friendly recognition of the unbeliever at 
all times.

Wedding of a Catholic and an 
Unbaptized Person

Suggestions for a liturgy are provided in 
the ritual.

The Wedding Liturgy

A lthough the general structure of the 
liturgy of the word and liturgy of 
the eucharist does not change, the 
readings, preface and other texts are spe-
cially chosen for marriage. The committee 
recommends that the introductory and 
concluding rites be adapted to reflect the 
particular needs and characteristics of the 
wedding liturgy. Thus the Proposed Order of 
Christian Marriage includes in the introd-
cutory and concluding rites some elements 
that are sometimes placed in the liturgy of 
marrige itself. In part this is a way of dis-
tinguishing peripheral (secondary) from 
central (primary) elements, of placing pre-
liminary elements early in the wedding 
liturgy instead of later, and as a way of 
keeping the liturgy of marriage focused on 
central and more important elements.

Introductory Rites

In the minds of many people the focus of 
the wedding is the bride. A shift of focus is 
needed. This is the purpose of the intro-
ductive rites. People gather and partici-
pate fully in the liturgy to offer thanks to
God, to serve as witnesses, and to assure
the couple of their continuing support and
love. The assembly is one mode of Christ's
presence in the liturgy. The introductory
rites seek to build a sense of oneness in
Christ by helping the individuals and fam-
ilies who have assembled to become one
community in worship and praise. In this
way, all are ready to hear the word of God
and to celebrate the wedding liturgy more
devoutly.

Entrance Procession
Before the procession begins, the presiding
minister warmly greets the couple at the
back of the church. This welcome is part
of the liturgy and should be heard by all. It
recognizes the importance and presence of
the groom and bride and places their
presence in the context of the worshipping
assembly.

N. and N., I welcome you here in the
name of the Church.
All God's people share your joy today,
for we are here to celebrate the
triumph of love over division,
of life over death.
We thank you for your witness to
God's love in your lives.
Let us now celebrate that love together.

The entrance procession itself needs to be
consistent with the nature of marriage,
which is a relationship of mutuality
between wife and husband. It shares the
nature of the entrance procession at the
Sunday Eucharist. That is, while it may
involve a limited number of people, it
serves the whole assembly by echoing the
journey or gathering of each member of
the assembly. It is therefore most appro-
piate for the bride and groom, attendants,
parents and ministers—all—to participate
in the procession.

People have a strong desire to watch the
wedding party during the procession and
are reluctant to use hymnals at this time.
Participation is enhanced, therefore, if
suitable instrumental music is used to
accompany the procession. When the pro-
cession reaches the front of the assembly is
a more appropriate time to sing an open-
ing song. The new ritual encourages the
use of an opening song, which fosters unity
within the assembly, expresses a sense of
celebration, and prepares the assembly to
listen to the word of God. It is intended to
be a prayerful and joyful song that is sung
by all, and focuses our attention on the
action of God in our midst.

For pastoral reasons, the entrance proces-
sion of the bridal party may be omitted.
The couple, attendants and parents enter
without ceremony and sit together near
the front. The ministers enter in the usual
liturgical procession, during which the
opening song is sung. The presiding minis-
ter then informally welcomes the bride
and groom and invites them and their
attendants and parents to take their places
for the liturgy.

Address and Statement of Intention
The committee has recommended that
the address, questions to the couple, and
affirmation by families and assembly be
placed among the introductory rites to
establish the nuptial nature of the liturgy
from the very beginning and to remove
these less central elements from the
litur-
gy of marriage that follows the liturgy of
the word. The presiding minister says a
few words to all about the meaning of the
wedding liturgy; this address should be
brief and should not take the form of a
homily. The questions are intended to
establish, in the presence of the local
Church, that the couple understands what
they are about to celebrate, that marriage
is their intention, and that they enter into
the marriage freely and consciously.

The following proposed text illustrates
how the brief address once again sets a
larger context for the wedding ceremony:

Dear friends,
our coming together today is an occa-
sion of joy.
We gather to celebrate the love of N.
and N..
as they pledge themselves to each other in the sight of God and the Church. By our presence we witness to the reality of their love; by our prayers we ask that God will sustain and enrich their new life together in the sacrament of marriage.¹

Affirmation by Families and Assembly Consultation and comments to the committee have often requested an affirmation by the family and friends of the couple. And so, the affirmation provides an opportunity for the families publicly to express their support and love for the couple. This act by all members of both families may replace the older (and now unacceptable) custom of the father giving away the bride. When either of the families is absent or for other pastoral reasons, it may be omitted or adapted. The affirmation by the assembly invites the community to accept and express its responsibility and support for the couple not only during the wedding liturgy but also during their married life. It states as well that the wedding liturgy is an act of the entire assembly and not only of the couple and families, and encourages the participation of all for the entire liturgy. It also challenges the community to renew its ultimate priority: union with Christ.

The following is one model proposed:

(Presider) Do you, the families of N. and N., give your love and blessing to this new family?
(Response) We do.
(Presider) Will all of you [the assembly], by God's grace do everything in your power to uphold and care for these two persons in their new life together?
(Response) We will.²

Opening Prayer The opening prayer speaks about marriage and invokes God's care on the couple. It is a prayer of the entire community, and it is important that there be a significant period of silent prayer following the invitation to pray. Numerous prayers are set in place for the wedding within Mass and the wedding within a liturgy of the word; any of these texts may be used on either occasion.

Liturgy of Marriage The following adaptations or new elements are suggested in the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage. Note the use of music.

Song of Praise – Acclamation – Affirmation As in the introductory rite, an opportunity or opportunities for the assembly to express its support, encouragement and solidarity in prayer are proposed. These include several elements.

A suitable song or acclamation may be sung within the liturgy of marriage, either before or after the exchange of vows or within the nuptial blessing. The song of praise or acclamation provides an opportunity to express joy and festivity, but also reverence and awe appropriate to the occasion. It provides an opportunity for all to participate, and invites their participation throughout the liturgy of marriage. Several suggestions will be made from Catholic Book of Worship III, such as: 579A, 580, 633.

Posture and Movement It is highly desirable that the assembly be able to see the couple's joining of hands and exchange of rings. Depending on the architecture of the church, this might be facilitated in several ways:

- if the people sat for some parts of the wedding liturgy and stand for the song

¹ Rite of Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (1979).
of praise or acclamation, the intercessions and nuptial blessing.

- if the bride and groom, presiding minister and principal attendants move to appropriate positions in the church so that they are clearly visible to the assembly; thus the presider will not stand where he might obstruct their view. Attendants as well should not obstruct the view of the assembly.

Audibility
The presiding minister needs to be heard when speaking the presider's texts. The bride and groom need to be heard when exchanging their vows and rings. If the presiding minister helps the couple with their vows by saying one line at a time, his voice should not be audible to the rest of the assembly—just the voices of the bride and groom should be audible. The use of a microphone is often required, and its proper use needs to be rehearsed.

Exchange of Vows
The joining of hands and exchange of vows is the central sacramental act in the liturgy of marriage. Upon the invitation of the presiding minister, the couple join their hands as a symbol of their unity in marriage. This solemn gesture needs to be done with care and so that their joined hands are visible to the rest of the assembly. The following is one of the proposed texts for the invitation to the exchange of vows:

N. and N.,
The moment has come
to give yourselves one to the other.
Standing in the light of this paschal candle,
may the Spirit of Christ in whom you were baptized
be in your hearts
and on your lips as you exchange your vows.
Give each other your right hand
as a sign of your love and your mutual gift.3

The bride and groom should be encouraged to recite their vows from memory. Alternatively, the bride and groom may read the vows from the liturgical book held by a minister. If needed, the bride and groom may repeat the words of the vows which are first said, line by line, by the presiding minister; only the bride and groom will be heard by the assembly. As indicated above, it is imperative that the vows be clearly heard by all.

Affirmation of the Marriage
Immediately following the exchange of vow, the presiding minister acknowledges the vows of the couple in the name of the Church and affirms that the couple is now married. It is now recommended that an opportunity be given to the assembly to express its affirmation, joy and love. This is an expression of joy and thanksgiving and, wherever possible, should be sung. In this acclamation all express the joy that they share with the couple and affirm their support of this marriage in years to come. During the affirmation the couple keep their hands joined during the minister's words. It is inappropriate for the minister to introduce the couple to the assembly.

Prayer of the Couple (option)
It is desirable that the couple say together a brief prayer composed by themselves in consultation with the presiding minister. They may wish to put into words some of their aspirations for their life together. Model prayers will be provided. If one of these is used, it should be freely adapted while avoiding idiosyncratic and unbecoming expressions.

Nuptial Blessing
In addition to the three Roman texts, new and original prayers are proposed. The choice of text should be made according to pastoral circumstances and in the light of discussion of these texts during preparation for marriage. Various paragraphs may

3 Adapted from Rituel du Mariage.
be adapted or omitted as described in the rubrics.

Though the nuptial blessing is spoken by the presiding minister, it is a prayer of the entire assembly, and every effort needs to be made to gather all present into its proclamation. It begins with an invitation for all to pray, and ample time should be provided for silent prayer; only then does the presiding minister proceed. Even though lengthy, the nuptial blessing should not be rushed, and it should be spoken with appropriate inflection and emphasis.

It is desirable that the concluding “Amen” be sung by the assembly. Sung acclamations for the assembly are included within some of the nuptial blessings as well. These provide important opportunities for participation by the couple and the assembly. Suggested acclamations will be provided.

**General Intercessions**

Prayer for the Church and for the world is a responsibility of all the baptized, and so general intercessions are always included in the wedding liturgy. They should respect both the form and scope prescribed in the sacramentary and include intentions for the couple. The structure and form of the general intercessions, as well as model texts, are provided. These need to be adapted for use in specific cases; they should never be used simply as printed. The response to the petitions may be sung, and this may enable the assembly to respond more consciously and meaningfully to these prayers of intercession.

**Concluding Rites**

**Signing of Civil Documents of Marriage**

The signing of civil documents of marriage is not part of the Church’s wedding liturgy, and hence should not be more than a minor element in the celebration as a whole. However, the civil dimension of the marriage liturgy cannot be dismissed, and the signing of these documents in public in the church may be appropriate. It may take place in the sight of the assembly, at a table in or near the sanctuary, but never on the altar. Alternatively, this may take place in the sacristy, or in the narthex after the procession. The signing is to be carried out expeditiously and not unduly prolonged or disrupted by the taking of photographs or video recordings.

While the civil documents are being signed, an atmosphere of prayer should be maintained. Suitable wedding music may be played by an instrumentalist, or a song may be sung by the choir, a soloist, or the assembly.

**Gift from the Community (option)**

A gift from the community, such as an inscribed Bible or New Testament, or a cross or an icon for the new home, may be presented to the couple by a representative of the parish or by the presiding minister. The gift is a sign of the love and care of the local parish for the newly married couple. In the new home, this gift could be a focus for family prayer.

The gift is to be standard in any one community, and distinctions among persons must never be shown. It must be a genuine gift and not a token that is retrieved and reused in another wedding.

The following is a model text:

*Our parish community wishes you well, and offers you this (bible/crucifix) for your home.*

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom,*

*and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God (Col 3.16).*

**Blessing**

Either simple or solemn blessings may be used. In the latter case, care should be taken that the solemn blessing not appear more important than the nuptial blessing which, in the wedding within a liturgy of the word, has just been said.

The presiding minister says a blessing over the assembly. Simple blessings are directed
to the entire assembly. The first three parts of the solemn blessings are directed toward the couple, while the concluding trinitarian formula is directed to all present. The presiding minister indicates this difference by the way he imparts the blessing.

Dismissal
Alternative forms of dismissal allow for different pastoral emphases. They may be adapted or replaced with other texts. Their purpose is to link the wedding liturgy to the social celebrations that follow and to the couple's subsequent life together.

The following is one of the proposed texts:

We have witnessed the wedding of N. and N.
Let us keep them in our prayers and encourage them with our love, as we go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Procession
After the dismissal, the bride and groom process to the doors of the church. Usually this is less formal in tone than the entrance procession. Attendants or family members may carry the community gift.

Music for the procession should be vigorous and joyful. It may be instrumental or a song of the assembly. It is hospitable for the bride and groom to greet people informally after the procession.

Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist
The liturgy of the word is considered in the pastoral notes. Attention is paid to the choice of readings and to the singing of the responsorial psalm and gospel acclamation. The proclamation of Scripture is the foundation of all worship and one of the primary elements in the celebration of marriage. In the proclamation of the word, Christ is present to his people. The liturgy of the word is God's living call, engaging the assembly and evoking its response within the liturgy of marriage that follows.

Attention needs to be paid to the ministry of lector, or reader. The lector is of great importance in this part of the wedding liturgy. A poor or unprepared reader will fail to proclaim the message of God's word effectively or to elicit the response of faith of the couple and the assembly. In addition, because the liturgy of the word constitutes such a large part of the overall wedding liturgy, a poor reader may make the liturgy boring and a poor human experience. If at all possible, one of the experienced readers of the parish should perform this ministry. If others are asked to be readers, they should rehearse with a parish minister.

The homily is based on the message of the biblical texts that have been read and on the prayers and rites of the wedding liturgy. The homilist will speak of Christian marriage as a manifestation of God's love, the dignity of the love of man and woman, the grace of the sacrament of marriage, and the responsibilities of those who marry. He should take into account the presence of persons who may be unfamiliar with the Church and its worship. The homilist may invite married couples present inwardly to renew their own marriage promises.

As ministers of the sacrament of marriage, the bride and groom must speak their vows in an audible fashion. They may speak briefly of their love, their own vision of marriage and their unique hopes for the living out of this vocation in the Church by means of the prayer of the couple.

Liturgy of the Eucharist
The liturgy of the word leads to the action of the assembly. This action is first manifested in the exchange of the vows by the bride and groom and in the prayer of the assembly for the couple; now the whole assembly gives praise and thanks to God. In addition the four actions of the
The Wedding Liturgy

The eucharist should stand out as clearly as they should at the Sunday eucharist. As noted above the ability of the bride and groom, their families and the assembly to participate in and carry out the action of the eucharist should determine the appropriateness of celebrating the liturgy of the eucharist in conjunction with the liturgy of the word and marriage.

Preparing the altar — Presenting the gifts
As an expression of their participation in the liturgy of the eucharist on their wedding day and as an extension of the close relationship between marriage and eucharist, the couple, alone or with the help of their attendants, may prepare the altar with cloth and candles, and place flowers in appropriate places. This models and reflects the setting of the table of their domestic church that will be so significant during their married life. The couple may wish a collection to be taken up for a worthy charity. The couple may also take the gifts of bread and wine to the altar and give them to the presiding minister.

Giving thanks and praise
Attention to the musical dimensions of the liturgy of the eucharist is essential in liturgical planning. The singing of the eucharistic acclamations supports and gives expression to the praise and thank-giving of the eucharistic prayer that should pervade the celebration of the liturgy of the eucharist. The eucharistic prayer should be prayed in a manner that gives expression to unity that exists between the proclamation of the priest and the participation of the assembly in the spirit of the prayer and the sung acclamations.

Breaking of Bread
As indicated in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, sufficient bread should be consecrated for the communion of the people. This may be a difficult task, especially when the number of guests is unknown until the last moment. Nevertheless discussion beforehand with the bride and groom, should help to determine the number of guests who will be present. In addition, a host large enough to be broken and shared by the assembly should be used. The breaking of the bread shows forth the unity of the assembly as the body of Christ.

Take and eat and drink
The sign of eucharistic communion is most complete when both consecrated bread and consecrated wine are shared. Thus it is most desirable that the couple receive the cup as well as the consecrated bread. The cup should also be extended to all communicants, even where this has not been the local custom.
A Catechumenal Approach

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults considers the entire process of Christian initiation, which extends over a lengthy period of time, to be a single liturgical Ordo, though composed of several individual rites and other kinds of experiences. The graces associated with the celebration of RCIA have led a number of writers to suggest that the extended process of marriage also be considered as a single liturgical Ordo, along the lines of the RCIA.\(^1\) In the Canadian ritual book for marriage this position has been embraced and worked out in terms of concrete liturgies, theological principles, and pastoral notes.

Thus the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage views marriage as a process or experience that extends over a significant period of time. From one perspective, it extends from growing up in a Christian home through the fiftieth (or more) wedding anniversary. From another perspective it includes becoming engaged, preparing for marriage, the wedding itself, and settling down to married life afterwards. The extended process of marriage is viewed as having a unity as well as being composed of individual experiences.

**Familiaris Consortio**

Pope John Paul II is among the proponents of this catechumenal approach, especially in the document *Familiaris Consortio*,\(^2\) though his focus is mainly on marriage preparation. Marriage preparation, says the pope, "has to be seen and put into practice as a gradual and continuous process."\(^3\) With respect to a period of remote preparation, the pope says, "remote preparation begins in early childhood... It is the period when esteem for all authentic values is instilled, both in interpersonal and in social relationship..."\(^4\)

The pope considers a second period in greater depth:

"There will subsequently and gradually be built up the proximate preparation, which—from a suitable age and with adequate catechesis, as in a catechumenal process—involves a more specific preparation for the sacraments, as it were a rediscovery of them. This renewed catechesis of young people and others preparing for Christian marriage is absolutely necessary in order that the sacrament may be celebrated and lived

---


3. FC, no. 66.3.

4. FC, no. 66.4.

---

Volume 31 • Number 155 • 215
with the right moral and spiritual dispositions. The religious formation of young people should be integrated, at the right moment and in accordance with the various concrete requirements, with a preparation for life as a couple. This preparation will present marriage as an interpersonal relationship of a man and a woman that has to be continually developed, and it will encourage those concerned to study the nature of conjugal sexuality and responsible parenthood, with the essential medical and biological knowledge connected with it. It will also acquaint those concerned with correct methods for the education of children and will assist them in gaining the basic requisites for well-ordered family life, such as stable work, sufficient financial resources, sensible administration, notions of housekeeping."

The pope describes a period of immediate preparation as a "journey of faith, which is similar to the catechumenate." "Among the elements to be instilled ... there must also be a deeper knowledge of the mystery of Christ and the Church, of the meaning of grace and of the responsibility of Christian marriage, as well as preparation for taking an active and conscious part in the rites of the marriage liturgy.""

In a period of post-sacramental reflection, "young married couples should learn to accept willingly, and make good use of, the discreet, tactful and generous help offered by other couples that already have more experience of married and family life.""

It would be as wrong to speak of the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage as a "marriage preparation program" as it would be to speak of the RCIA as a "baptism preparation program." Rather, the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage sets forth a catechumenal process, not a preparation program. It sets forth a process of formation, not simply an education program. It sets forth a liturgical process and experience, not a program of lessons, instruction and rules. The wedding liturgy is not only the goal of the process, but also accompanies and guides the entire process; many other liturgies mark steps along the path from engagement to marriage to the living of the married life.

Because of the traditional understanding of the term "marriage preparation," it would be best to avoid or minimize using this term in relation to the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage. Instead, it would be better to speak of the "marriage catechumenate," in parallel with "initiation catechumenate."

Furthermore, it is helpful to recognize that the RCIA uses "catechumenate" and "catechumenal" in more than one way. Such terms can refer to one specific period or experience of the RCIA process; they are also used more broadly to describe the RCIA as a whole. In the case of the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage, catechumenate and catechumenal most commonly refer to the process as a whole.

The catechumenal process set forth in the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage takes marriage very seriously. It takes the position that Christian marriage—its initial celebration in the wedding liturgy and its living out over many years—needs not only appropriate education but also serious spiritual formation which is best carried out by liturgical celebration and reflection on this liturgical experience."

---

5 FC, no. 66.5.
6 FC, no. 66.8.
7 FC, no. 66.8.
8 FC, no. 69.2.
As in the RCIA, the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage envisions a process of four periods:

- The Period of Christian Nurture corresponds to RCIA's Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate;
- The Period of Engagement corresponds to RCIA's Period of the Catechumenate;
- The Period of Formation for Christian Marriage corresponds to RCIA's Period of Purification and Enlightenment;
- The Period of Reflection on the Vocation of Christian Marriage corresponds to RCIA's Period of Post-baptismal Catechesis or Mystagogy.

The Period of Christian Nurture begins with birth and ends with the mature, adult Christian becoming engaged to marry. It is, then, the time of growing up—becoming mature—physically, psychologically, spiritually. This includes the capacity to enter into the kind of personal relationship with another person that is called for in marriage. It is, further, growing up in a family where Christian marriage is modeled daily. It is, finally, growing up in the Church—the domestic Church of the home and the local church community of the parish. Christian nurture therefore is personal, social and ecclesial.

The time between engagement and the wedding is divided between the Period of Engagement and the Period of Formation for Christian Marriage. The Period of Engagement is seen as lasting six to twelve months, while the Period of Formation for Christian Marriage extends for roughly six weeks.

The Period of Engagement helps couples become ready for marriage and helps them discern if they are in fact ready for marriage. It includes education regarding marriage (e.g., communication, sexuality, finances and the like) and education regarding the Church's understanding of marriage. It includes both the deepening of the relationship between the couple and discerning if this relationship should indeed proceed to marriage; the breaking off of the relationship remains a definite possibility. Readiness for marriage is assessed by the couple themselves, with the help of family, sponsors, catechists and other pastoral ministers. The entire process is liturgical.

The Period of Formation for Christian Marriage is significantly different from the Period of Engagement. It assumes readiness for marriage: it is a time of formation (rather than education), and it is a period when Christian marriage is the focus. It is, then, a time of spiritual and theological reflection. It is a time of ecclesial recognition as well, and it is a time when the meaning of marriage as a sacrament, as a vocation, and as a ministry in the Church is reflected upon.

This period is a time of intense preparation for the liturgical celebration of marriage. It consists of preparation for, of, with and by the wedding liturgy. Couples come to know the wedding liturgy and thereby prepare for its celebration; they decide which options to use for their wedding and make other decisions regarding this liturgy. Their preparation for marriage is accompanied by reflection on the wedding liturgy, and this liturgy itself becomes the couple's guide and mentor.

In the Period of Reflection on the Vocation of Christian Marriage, the wedding liturgy is placed in dialogue with the actual experience of living the marriage relationship in the home, among their families and their married friends, and in the local Church community. This will be an ongoing dialogue that is seen as...
The Four Periods

lasting perhaps the entire first year of marriage.

The following section seeks to describe and capture the spirit of each period, its overall aim and both its unity and its development; this is central to the understanding and appreciation of the new ritual book.

Period of Christian Nurture
Young people first learn about marriage by growing up in a Christian family. Through their day-to-day example, parents demonstrate the nature of Christian marriage in the most concrete manner. From time to time parents will also speak to the children regarding their vision of Christian marriage. The family will be experienced as the domestic Church, with a regular life of prayer and ministry. Prayer and liturgical celebrations will accompany rising and going to bed, meal times, and mutual forgiveness. Wedding anniversaries will be celebrated annually. Parents will also bless their children, showing them that they are a blessing in the eyes of the parents, the Church, and God.

The loving community of the local Church also teaches young people about marriage. Both parents and Church will teach by example and by word that marriage is a genuine and valued vocation in the Church as well as in society. Families will participate in Sunday and other liturgies in the parish, bringing their children with them from birth. Young people will come to value liturgical prayer within the local Church community.

In the dual environments of the Christian family and the local Church community, children are nurtured and mature into adolescents and then young adults. As they grow, they begin to discover their own unique personality; character is built and values are instilled. They learn to relate to other persons and begin to take their place in society outside the family. Children begin to learn to love by sharing in the intimate affection that binds families together. Then, as they relate more and more closely to others, they will learn about friendship. Adolescence brings with it the capacity for romantic involvement, and as their religious and secular education proceeds, young people will be taught more about sexuality and marriage. With progressive physical and social development, they will learn how to relate to persons of the opposite sex in appropriate ways.

Some young men and women will bring romantic love to mature expression in marriage. Others will remain single or live celibate lives as religious or priests. The period of Christian nurture typically lasts for twenty to thirty years, much of it in the embrace of the family. Some young adults will live away from home before approaching marriage.

Period of Engagement
The period of engagement is an extended period during which engaged couples are given suitable pastoral formation and guidance aimed at preparing them to live as married couples. They will be imbued with appropriate moral and spiritual dispositions, and the Church’s teachings about marriage will be presented. This pastoral formation and guidance is a corporate experience of a number of couples, the Order of the Engaged, and includes several elements.

At or near the beginning of the period of engagement, couples should be given an overview of the wedding liturgy. Any initial preparation they may already have done will be discussed and recorded, though they will understand that more detailed study and preparation will be done later. Any misunderstandings they may have regarding the wedding liturgy will be gently corrected; this is an important teaching opportunity.

Couples will deepen their own relationship during the period of engagement. In addition, they will be testing their relationship to see if the engagement will proceed to marriage or should be broken off.
This growth and discernment will be done among themselves, with other engaged couples, with married couples who act as sponsors, and with the local Church community. As the couple moves toward marriage, they gradually learn to abandon dependent living for a life of mutual commitment.

A suitable catechesis is provided, intended to prepare the couple for marriage and allowing the couple and the Church to assess their readiness for marriage. Not every man and woman who experience mutual attraction have the capacity to create a stable marriage, and readiness for marriage needs to be assessed. It is natural and healthy for some engagements to be broken off during the period of engagement; the early steps and periods of the Order of Christian Marriage should not pressure couples to stay in relationships that are not suitable.

By the conclusion of the period of engagement, a Christian couple needs to show signs of human readiness for marriage. They should display a healthy degree of emotional integration, exhibit the capacity for deep friendship and exchange affection easily. They need to show a capacity to blend their lives and share a common appreciation for the significance of sexuality in the entire experience of marriage.

Couples must decide to enter unconditionally into a covenant relationship that is free, faithful and life-giving; they must accept in advance the sacrifices that this may entail. They must value one another as persons, find joy in one another’s accomplishments, and value the family as a fundamental human institution. As they come to share ideals and values, they will find that they challenge one another to grow in many ways.

Christian couples also need readiness in faith. The teachings of the Church regarding marriage will be presented in a serious and convincing manner; they will learn to prepare in prayer and come to love one another with the love of Jesus Christ.

They need to deepen their commitment to Christ and to the Christian community, and see marriage both as vocation and ministry.

Readiness for Christian marriage also requires that couples examine themselves for attitudes, feelings and experiences that might lead to an unhealthy approach to the relationship with one’s spouse or children or to the experience of marriage. Domination of the other partner, sexual stereotyping, self-centeredness, inability to take criticism, unwillingness to grow, emotional immaturity and other limitations need to be discerned and dealt with satisfactorily during the period of engagement. Readiness for Christian marriage also requires the capacity in both partners to forgive with Christ-like compassion.

Sponsors will help the engaged prepare for marriage and will help couples discern their readiness for marriage. These are married couples from the parish community who have a good married relationship and who can sympathetically but critically assist the couples by word and by example.

During this period the Church helps the engaged on their journey by means of liturgical celebrations of several kinds.

**Period of Formation for Christian Marriage**

Having heard the Church’s teaching about marriage, and having been prepared for human marriage, couples now enter into a more intense period of spiritual preparation for marriage. It consists more in interior reflection than in catechetical instruction, provides deeper spiritual insights, and emphasizes the nature of marriage as a sacrament. Couples become better known to the local Church community and receive the prayer of the Church. In addition to spiritual reflection and formation, certain liturgical celebrations accompany this period.

Couples must approach marriage in prayer. They need to pray alone, together, and with other engaged couples; regular partic-
ipation in the Sunday eucharist will be an important part of their preparation for marriage.

Marriage needs to be approached as a form of mutual Christian ministry. Spouses will minister to one another's needs and those of their children with the tenderness and compassion of Christ. They will also stand committed to reach out to persons in greatest need and to labor to heal divisions and inequalities in society. Couples will recognize that their relationship and marriage is in response to a call by God and that marriage is not only a responsibility but also a vocation in the Church.

Sacramental marriage will reaffirm their baptismal covenant, while simultaneously conferring upon them the rights and responsibilities of Christian spouses. They commit themselves irrevocably to one another and commit themselves to love one another with the atoning love of Christ. The marriage vows that they will exchange have been radically redeemed and transformed by Jesus Christ, and in sealing the marriage covenant Christian spouses enter more deeply into the paschal mystery by the selflessness with which they give themselves to one another. During this period couples may be named in the general intercessions of the Sunday eucharist.

Period of Reflection on the Vocation of Christian Marriage

The celebration of the sacrament of marriage is followed by a period of post-sacramental reflection and formation, or mystagogy. Depending on the circumstances of the lives of individual couples, this might take place soon after the wedding, somewhat later after they have settled into married life, or in preparation for their first wedding anniversary. Much of this reflection and formation will take place in the home, which is also the domestic Church.

Parish ministers and the entire local Church community will continue to reach out to newly married couples, welcome them and provide thoughtful and friendly help. Couples should be made to feel that they truly have a place in the local Church community, particularly among those who are married. Other married couples from the parish community will continue to act as sponsors, keeping in touch and providing help discreetly as needed; these may or may not be the same persons who acted as sponsors previously.

Couples should reflect seriously on the experience of being ministers of the sacrament of marriage and on the entire wedding liturgy. Parish ministers and sponsors will encourage this reflection and assist in this process. Couples will also be encouraged to make concrete links between the wedding liturgy (and the period of preparation that preceded it) and the actual living of the married life.

Married couples will also think more seriously and concretely about the life as a family that lies ahead of them. They will wish to consider such matters as the mutual support partners give each other and of ways of helping one another grow emotionally, morally and intellectually. They will develop a family prayer life and seek to foster their spiritual life as individuals and as a family.

Ways that the new family will relate to the wider Church and society also need reflection. The family, as well as the individual spouses, needs to be concerned with social justice and with the needs of those less fortunate. They will also forge new relationships with their families and friends, now as a couple. The way the ministerial vocation of the family will be lived out requires discernment and discussion.

Couples will begin to foresee the further changes in their lives that will come with the birth of children, if God so wills. Being wise and loving parents as well as faithful and caring spouses involves much mutual decision making and sharing of responsibilities. ❧
The Three Steps and Their Liturgies

As in the RCIA, movement from one period of the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage to another is marked by three steps, each consisting of a liturgical celebration.

- Entry into the Order of the Engaged corresponds to the RCIA's Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens;
- Call to the Vocation of Christian Marriage corresponds to the RCIA's Election or Enrollment of Names;
- Celebration of the Sacrament of Christian Marriage corresponds to the RCIA's Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation.

Entry into the Order of the Engaged is not entry into the human relationship we call engagement; it is not primarily a celebration of the act of becoming engaged. After all, in our society couples become engaged privately and then make their engagement known to the families and friends. The Church is not involved and does not think of "giving permission" for persons to become engaged; the Church does not have to "accept" a couple's engagement for it to become real or valid.

This step and its liturgy, however, mark the beginning of a public, formal and communal process of preparation for the marriage. It is communal because several couples travel together on this path; therefore the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage speaks of an Order—a company of persons—of the Engaged. It is public because couples make their engagement known to the Church's pastoral ministers and ask to be married in the Church. It is formal because it is a serious process of preparation which lasts a significant period of time.

The title, Call to the Vocation of Christian Marriage, uses the simpler, more direct, and Anglo-Saxon term "call" in place of the RCIA's "election." It also names what it is to which couples are called: the vocation of Christian marriage. Thus marriage is specified as Christian; it is also understood as a vocation, implying charism and ministry. This title also implies a significant ecclesial status for marriage; marriage is a vocation and ministry in the Church; it is celebrated by the Church; the Church and the couple have responsibilities to each other. The Church is experienced and is lived out at the level of the local Church community (the parish) and the home (the domestic Church).

The third step, Celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage, is marked by the wedding liturgy, which has been considered above.

The following passages regarding the first and second steps are quotations from the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage.

First Step: Entry into the Order of the Engaged

Christian couples commonly become engaged privately. They then make their engagement known to their families and friends, and perhaps even set a provisional date for their wedding. Their engagement may suitably be celebrated in the home by family and friends; a model liturgy is provided for such an occasion. The couple will then approach the Church, asking to be married. They should be warmly welcomed. The pastor should get to know them and find out if there are any impediments to their marriage in the Church. They will be introduced to other couples who are also seeking to be married. The group of engaged couples will be invited to enter a public and formal period of preparation for marriage; this is an opportunity to deepen their relationship to one anoth-
er and their commitment to the Christian vision of marriage. This period will include prayer, instruction, and celebration; couples will learn from each other, from married couples, and from the Church. They will receive the Church's prayer, and the Church will invoke God's blessing upon them.

The liturgy of entry into the Order of the Engaged will be celebrated six to twelve months prior to the anticipated date of the wedding. The rite consists in the celebration of the word of God, renewal of the baptismal covenant, calling couples to enter the Order of the Engaged, prayers for the engaged, and blessing. Renewal of the baptismal covenant is included because Christian marriage has its roots in baptism and the other sacraments of initiation. In baptism women and men are initiated into the Church; they become sisters and brothers of Jesus Christ and enter into his paschal mystery; they are filled with the Holy Spirit and begin to live transformed lives; they become adopted children of God.

Marriage represents a new beginning in the Christian life, one that specifies the baptismal life in a special way. Marriage also represents a new vocation in the Church, a vocation which makes more concrete the general Christian vocation to which the bride and groom were called in baptism.

Rite of Entry into the Order of the Engaged

In the position within the catechumenal process that the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage sets forth, the rite of Entry into the Order of the Engaged corresponds to the RCIA's Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens. The structure and orientation of the RCIA's liturgy, however, has to do with coming into the Church from outside the Church; this does not correspond to the situation of baptized Christian couples. A more appropriate structure, in fact, is found in the RCIA's rite of Election or Enrollment of Names.

The rite of entry is placed in the context of the gathered people of God, the proclamation of God's word, and if appropriate, the celebration of the eucharist. This liturgy first of all roots marriage in baptism through the renewal of baptismal promises. (Later, the marriage vows may be exchanged in the light of the paschal candle.)

The couples then assert their ministry in the Church, looking forward to the day when they act as ministers of the sacrament of marriage during the wedding liturgy. They speak their names, express their hopes for their relationship as engaged couples, and state their wish to journey towards marriage as members of the Order of the Engaged. The presiding minister invites the couples to declare their wishes, and welcomes their responses.

The couples are assured that they are not alone in their journey toward marriage. They proceed in the first place assured of the love and grace of God. They are accompanied as well by the Church, represented by members of the local community, pastoral ministers, sponsors and catechists. Especially, they travel with other engaged couples, who together constitute the Order of the Engaged. They have a special place in the Church.

Finally, this rite honours the engagement rings that they are already wearing; these (together with the couples themselves) are the principal symbols of the Order of the Engaged. Both the rings and the couples receive a special blessing.

This liturgy is for use at the beginning of the public phase of engagement, when several couples join together in their journey toward the celebration of Christian marriage by entering into the Order of the Engaged. Members of the local parish community should participate. This liturgy may be celebrated within Mass, with a priest as presiding minister, or within a liturgy of the word with a priest or deacon as presiding minister.
Some of the scripture references given in this rite are particularly suited to the occasion and not found in the lectionary, which covers more general circumstances. It will be important, therefore, to prepare a Bible reading for use in this liturgy.

The period before marriage needs to be open to the possibility that the engagement may be broken off. This liturgy should not inhibit this possibility by being too solemn or public. It is probably best, therefore, not to celebrate it during a regular Sunday celebration of the parish.

It is desirable that some members of the local Christian community take an active part in the celebration. From this time on, the Church embraces the engaged as its own with a mother's love and concern.

Rite of Entry into the Order of the Engaged

An outline and some of the texts of this liturgy that are proposed follow.

- Introductory Rites
  A song may be sung. The customary introductory rites are used.

- Liturgy of the Word
  15 readings are suggested; a homily is preached.

- Renewal of Baptismal Covenant
  The Apostles' Creed is used.

- Calling Forth of the Couples (presiding minister:)
  Those who are about to enter into the Order of the Engaged, please come forward, together with your sponsors.
  Couples respond by speaking their names and if desired, by speaking briefly about their hopes for their relationship as engaged persons.

- Brief Address (presiding minister:)
  You declared your desire to marry each other privately, and then shared that good news with your families. You now come to the Church, seeking in due course to celebrate the sacrament of Christian marriage.
  The journey of engaged couples toward marriage involves the deepening of your relationship and the testing of that relationship; it also includes learning more about the human and spiritual dimensions of marriage, and more about yourselves as well.

  In this journey you will not travel alone, but rather with other engaged couples, with married members of the Church, your sponsors, and with the pastoral ministers of the Church; you will be accompanied as well by the prayer of the entire Church community.

  As members of the Order of the Engaged, you have a privileged place in the Church, with both rights and responsibilities. You have the right to the prayer and pastoral ministry of the Church and to the best possible journey of preparation for sacramental marriage. You have the responsibility to participate as fully as possible in the journey of the Order of the Engaged.

- Affirmation of Couples (presiding minister:)
  Will you, the sponsors of these couples, support and help them as they prepare for marriage?
  R. We will.

  Will all of you (the assembly) by God's grace do everything in your power to uphold and care for these couples as they proceed on the path to marriage?
  R. We will.

- Entry into the Order of the Engaged (presiding minister:)
  Do you wish to follow the path toward the sacrament of Christian marriage by entering the Order of the Engaged?
  R. We do.

  Thanks be to God.
  I welcome you into the Order of the Engaged.
  Amen.

- Intercessions
  (Based on RCIA, no. 65)
The Three Steps and Their Liturgies

• Blessing of Couples and Engagement Rings

The couples hold each other's hands as the blessing is spoken. [Two texts are provided.]

[Presiding minister:]

God of all grace,
we ask you to bless these rings, tokens of affection,
given and received in promise of future marriage.

Bless these couples,
that they may shine like precious gems,
reflecting your glory,
rejoicing in your goodness to them.

Let these rings constantly remind them of the journey they have begun together.
As they set aside past attachments, may they grow together in love,
cherish one another as treasure beyond price,
and honour the precious gift of self-offering,
held in trust for their marriage day.

Bless them and strengthen their hearts to keep faith with each other,
and in all trials to discern your will.
Be with them,
and with your gentle hand to guide their lives,
may they be one in hope, as they seek to please you always.
We ask this... Amen.5

• Liturgy of the Eucharist

• Concluding Rites

Second Step: Call to the Vocation of Christian Marriage

The rite of Call to the Vocation of Christian Marriage follows the same basic structure as the rite of Entry into the Order of the Engaged. The setting is the gathering of God's people, the word is proclaimed and preached, and if appropriate the eucharist is celebrated. Again, couples are invited to respond to a call to be a member not just of the Order of the Engaged but to the vocation of Christian marriage. There is an invitation, a change to the couples, and opportunities for them to respond to this call.

Following the intercessions, the couples are invited to anoint each other's hands with perfumed oil. This will be a new liturgical experience for many, and it deserves comment.

Hands are important in the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage. The joining of hands as vows are exchanged is the central symbol of the wedding liturgy. The symbol of the Order of the Engaged, the engagement ring, is worn on a finger of the hand. In married life, hands are instruments of work, by which the family's daily bread will be earned. Hands are used to show love and affection. Hands are used to care for children. Hands are used in healing ways when family members are ill. Hands show emotion and are a means of communication and expression. Hands, in short, represent and point to the whole body and to the whole person.

Though we call it by other names, anointing with perfumed oil is a significant part of daily life. We use "perfumed oils" such as hand lotions, hair dressings, scents and perfumes, bath oils, etc., for comfort, health and beauty—and this a very big business. The Church uses oils—perfumed or not—in baptism, confirmation, ordination, and the anointing of the sick: all are sacraments of vocation (among other things); in all cases oil is a sign of the Holy Spirit.

The oil used in this liturgy is not that blessed by the bishop on Holy Thursday; it is not the chrism or other oils used in the sacramental liturgies; the prayer of blessing

cannot possibly be mistaken for one of the official texts for the blessing of oils. This oil is, however, a reminder of the sacramental oils, just as all water is a reminder of the water of baptism and all bread and wine are reminders of the Body and Blood of the eucharist. We know the difference between the consecrated symbols of the sacramental liturgies and the natural products that remind us of these.

This period in the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage emphasizes vocation; it is therefore appropriate that a traditional symbol of vocation—perfumed oil—is employed. The couple anoint each other’s hands in mutual sharing and ministry, since they will be the ministers of the sacrament of marriage and share in the ministry that is the daily living out of their married life. The oil affirms beauty, the fundamental beauty that is bestowed by God in creation, not that acquired by cosmetics. The oil makes connections with important biblical forebears who regrettably are too often forgotten.

The second step in Christian marriage is the liturgical rite termed “call to the vocation to Christian marriage.” It closes the period of engagement, the lengthy period of formation of couples’ hearts and minds. It also marks the beginning of the period of final, more intense preparation for the sacrament of marriage.

After hearing God’s word, couples will be called forth and anoint each other’s hands with perfumed oil. This reminds them of their postbaptismal and confirmation anointings, in which they were joined to Jesus Christ and given the gift of the Holy Spirit; it also strengthens and deepens their relationship with the triune God. The anointing is also a sign that marriage is a vocation to which some are called by God, and a charism in the Church and world for which they are equipped by gifts of the Holy Spirit. They anoint each other on the hands because hands are instruments of work inside and outside the home as well as being means by which couples show affection for one another and care for their children. As prospective ministers of the sacrament of marriage, couples take an active ministry as anointers of each other; they are not anointed by some other minister. This anointing also shows mutuality and sharing in ministry and in family life.

This rite is to be celebrated at least six weeks prior to the wedding. It may be celebrated within Mass, with a priest as presiding minister, or within a liturgy of the word with a priest or deacon as presiding minister. It is a formal liturgy of the parish, and as many members of the local community as possible should participate.

- Introductory Rites
- Liturgy of the Word
  (Readings may be taken from those listed for engagement or for marriage; a homily is preached)
- Calling Forth of the Couples
  (presiding minister:)
  Those who accept the call to the vocation of Christian marriage, please come forward.
  Couples respond by speaking their names and, if desired, by speaking briefly about their hopes for Christian marriage.
- Brief Address
  (presiding minister:)
  In baptism and confirmation you were anointed, in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, to the vocations of priest, prophet and ruler. Soon you will enter into the vocation of Christian marriage. Today the Church invites you to accept and affirm God’s call to the vocation of marriage; rejoice in this call, and seek to appreciate its significance more deeply during the final stage of preparation.

We will celebrate your call to the vocation of Christian marriage by inviting you to anoint the hands of your partner with blessed and perfumed oil. Anointing is a sign that marriage is a vocation in the church and a charism of the Holy Spirit.
After your marriage you will work with your hands, both inside and outside the home. You will touch one another in expressing your love and affection. If God wills, you will hold and care for your children.

Today you are invited to anoint the hands of your partner to affirm that, as God’s creation and gift, he or she is holy, good and beautiful.

- Acceptance of the Call to the Vocation of Christian Marriage
  (presiding minister)
  Do you accept the call to the vocation of Christian marriage?
  R. We do.
  I affirm your call to the vocation to Christian marriage and invite you to enter into the final and intense period of spiritual reflection in preparation for the celebration of the sacrament of marriage.
  R. Thanks be to God.

- Intercessions
  (Based on RCIA 129, 140)

- Anointing of Hands
  The presiding minister blesses perfumed oil as follows, with hands outstretched over the oil. The couples may also stretch out their hands toward the oil.
  Blessed are you, Holy God: you created spice-bearing plants and oil-bearing trees, and saw that it was good.
  Ruth the Moabite anointed herself and became one of the foremothers of Jesus.
  Judith and Esther anointed themselves and liberated your people from oppression.
  God anointed his spouse Israel with oil, and entered into covenant with her.
  Faithful, loving women anointed the feet and head of Jesus, preparing him for burial.
  And on Easter morn Mary Magdalene and other women took spices and went to anoint the body of Jesus, who was risen.
  Bless us and this oil, that in our use of it you may be blessed and these faithful women may be remembered.
  We ask this through Jesus the Anointed One.
  Amen.
  Couples anoint each other’s hands, in silence or using words such as the following:
  N., I anoint your hands in remembrance of the women who anointed Jesus, and in praise of God who has made you beautiful and who has called us to the vocation of Christian marriage.
  Amen.
  or
  N., I anoint the hands that we will soon join in Christian marriage.

- Prayer over the Couples
- Liturgy of the Eucharist
- Concluding Rites
The principal liturgies within the period of Christian nurture and the period of reflection on the vocation of Christian marriage are the Sunday eucharist. In addition, the latter period includes a blessing of the home, considered below under Liturgies in the Home.

Liturgies within the Period of Engagement are inspired by the RCIA:

• Celebrations of the Word and Marriage Preparation correspond to the RCIA’s Celebrations of the Word of God;
• Liturgies of Conversion and Healing are inspired in part by the RCIA’s minor exorcisms and in part by penitential services;
• Blessings of Engaged Couples and Blessing of Engaged Couples during a Retreat correspond to the RCIA’s Blessings of the Catechumens.

**Period of Engagement**

**Celebrations of the Word and Marriage Preparation**

This liturgy, which is quite flexible and which is to be celebrated frequently, supercedes the traditional marriage preparation sessions or classes.

Members of the Order of the Engaged will prepare together for marriage, and it is highly desirable that their meetings take place in a context of prayer. Presentations and discussions will begin with prayer and be inspired by scripture readings used in the wedding liturgy. In this way the spiritual, intellectual and practical formation of the couples may be integrated.

**Song**

**Invitation to prayer**

**Opening prayer**

**Scripture**

**Marriage preparation**

**Intercessions**

**Lord’s Prayer**

**Concluding prayer**

**Blessing for the couples**

**Song**

**Liturgies of Conversion and Healing**

Liturgies of conversion and healing arise out of self-examination of couples’ attitudes toward marriage and a willingness to renounce and leave behind anything that is not healthy or conducive to true Christian marriage. At the same time they provide opportunities to celebrate growth in their relationship.

**Song**

**Invitation to prayer**

**Opening prayer**

**Scripture readings**

**Reflection**

**Examination of Christian living**

**Silent prayer**

**Prayer of conversion**

**Act of reconciliation or healing**

**Lord’s Prayer**

**Blessing and dismissal**

**Song**

For the acts of repentance, reconciliation and healing, four alternatives are suggested.

- Couples may hold hands, look into each other’s eyes, and say the “I confess.”
- A kiss or hug may be exchanged, in silence or with appropriate words.
- Each partner may anoint the other with oil, in silence or with appropriate words. (Baby oil may be used, as is appropriate for a gesture of healing.)
- The presiding minister or participants may compose or choose appropriate prayers of actions.
Blessings of Engaged Couples

The blessings of the engaged are a sign of God’s love and of the Church’s tender care. The engaged receive from the Church courage, joy, and peace as they proceed along the journey they have begun. These blessings may be given at the end of a celebration of the word and marriage preparation or a liturgy of conversion and healing, or at a celebration of the word and preparation for the wedding liturgy. When there is some special need, the blessings may be given privately to individual couples. These texts may be adapted as seems appropriate.

Blessing of Engaged Couples during a Retreat

As part of their preparation for marriage during the period of engagement or the period of formation for Christian marriage, couples may participate in one or more retreats. During liturgies celebrated as part of these retreats, special blessings may be given to the engaged couples.

Period of Formation for Christian Marriage

The principal liturgy within the Period of Formation for Christian Marriage is also inspired by the RCIA:

• Celebrations of the Word and Preparation for the Wedding Liturgy relate to RCIA’s Celebrations of the Word of God and also the RCIA’s Scrutinies and Presentations.

Celebrations of the Word and Preparation for the Wedding Liturgy

This liturgy, which is quite flexible and which is to be celebrated frequently, supersedes the traditional marriage preparation sessions or classes.

Those called to the vocation of Christian marriage will prepare for the celebration of the sacrament of marriage through celebrations of the word and reflection on the major elements of the wedding liturgy. These celebrations will also help them complete the preparation of the liturgy for their marriage. In these celebrations couples will learn more about the wedding liturgy, reflect on its meaning, choose among the options offered, and prepare various aspects of the liturgy of marriage. In doing so, couples will come to appreciate more the nature of their vocation as those called to Christian marriage, as well as the nature of the sacrament of Christian marriage itself. All will be done in the context of prayer.

Song
Invitation to prayer
Opening prayer
Scripture reading
Preparation for the wedding liturgy
Concluding prayer
Blessing and dismissal
Song

Liturgies in the Home

During the course of the catechumenal process set forth in the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage, liturgies are celebrated in the home as well as in the church; lay persons preside.

Celebration of Engagement in the Home (Period of Engagement)

After the couple has announced their engagement to their families, it is appropriate for all to celebrate this event at a family meal. Depending on circumstances, one or both sets of parents and siblings may be present, together with close friends.

The rite offered here may be used for this celebration; it is a model which may be freely adapted. A parent, another family member, or friend may act as presiding minister.

During the reflection, the couple may speak of their hopes and dreams for their relationship and forthcoming marriage. Later, they may say together a short prayer of their own composition.

During the prayer of blessing over the couple, all present may participate by extending one or both hands over or toward the couple.
Invitation to prayer
Scripture verse
Reflection
Blessing of the couple
Prayer of the couple
Lord's Prayer
Kiss of peace
Blessing of food and drink
Toast

_Blessing of Food and Drink in the Home (Period of Engagement)_

This simple, occasional rite is offered for use whenever the engaged couple meet at each other's home for a more formal meal. It is a table ritual at which other members of the family (or families) and close friends would normally be present.

Invitation to prayer
Scripture verse
Blessing prayer
Meal
Intercessions
Concluding prayer of praise

_Blessing of Sons and Daughters (Period of Formation for Christian Marriage)_

As the time of the wedding approaches, the parents are encouraged both to bless God for the gift of their son or daughter, and to ask God's continual blessing and protection for their children in the new life about to be undertaken. This blessing may be extended to their future son-in-law or daughter-in-law.

This blessing may take place at a special meal. This brief rite may be used in each family home, or only once, if both families can gather together. The laying on of hands is a most ancient and natural gesture of blessing. All present may share in this action.

Song
Invitation to prayer
Scripture reading
Presentation of a Bible
Intercessions
Lord's Prayer
Family blessing
Concluding prayer
Song

_Blessing of the Home (Period of Reflection on the Vocation of Christian Marriage)_

The Church's concern for its married members continues after the wedding day. The whole community has a special care for married couples, especially in the first months after their wedding. Pastors have a special responsibility to support newlyweds through pastoral care and prayer with them. For these reasons, the custom of blessing the home should be encouraged. In this act of worship, the Church asks the Lord to be present in the home and make it a haven of peace and a harbor of faith. The graces invoked upon the couple in the wedding service are here recalled and related to the concrete environment in which they are to be exercised.

Song
Greeting
Introduction
Scripture reading
Reflection
Prayers (in each room in the house)
(Placing of the gift from the community)
Lord's Prayer
Prayer over the couple
Dismissal
Song

_Table Prayers and Blessings (Period of Reflection on the Vocation of Christian Marriage)_

Meals are important occasions for family gathering. Community is built up at meals, stories are told and listened to, reconciliation is exchanged, sustenance is shared. Meals are, therefore, important times for family prayer and blessing; the table is the focus for important occasions in the life of the domestic Church.

Pastors and other pastoral ministers, as well as sponsors and friends, should encourage couples to pray regularly and creatively when they gather at table and give them a good example.

_Immediate Preparation for the Wedding Liturgy_

The RCIA makes provision for preparatory liturgies to be celebrated on Holy
Liturgies for Married Life

Saturday morning in preparation for the Easter Vigil. So too the Proposed Order of Christian Marriage includes several liturgies and prayers for the day or week prior to the celebration of the wedding liturgy.

Reconciliation before the Wedding

The parish priest should offer couples an opportunity to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation before the wedding. It is often more appropriate to do this a week or so before the wedding rather than at the time of the rehearsal. The same opportunity should be offered to family members and close friends who may gather only at the time of the rehearsal.

Mass before a Wedding

When the sacrament of marriage will be celebrated within a liturgy of the word, one of the partners or the couple may wish to join with family and friends in a celebration of the eucharist on the day before the wedding. The priest should seek to involve the partner, couple or family in the liturgy as far as possible. A brief homily should be given and the couple should be prayed for in the general intercessions.

Prayers for the Rehearsal and Rehearsal Supper

Prayers are provided for the rehearsal and one for a rehearsal supper.

Liturgies for Married Life

Liturgies and prayers are provided for wedding anniversaries and other significant occasions during the life of the married couple.

The wedding liturgy commits a couple to a covenant relationship which endures for life. Their families and friends are invited to support them in this relationship, and the Church will assist them not just with its continuing pastoral care but also in its liturgical celebrations. These give expression to the sacrament of marriage as an ongoing reality and mark significant stages of the marriage with prayer and ritual affirmation.

Couples will often keep their wedding anniversaries with a celebration with family and friends. Such occasions can be deepened and enriched by a liturgy, either in the home or in church, within a Mass or within a liturgy of the word. On the twenty-fifth and fiftieth anniversaries, these celebrations may take a more developed form. Sometimes at such anniversaries, or at other moments of special significance, a couple may wish to renew their marriage vows. Within a stable relationship this renewal may be the expression of an instinct to reaffirm a continuing commitment, rather in the way that all the baptized periodically renew their commitment at the Easter Vigil.

Celebrating an Anniversary in the Home

Anniversaries are appropriately celebrated at a festive meal in the home. Before the celebratory meal gets underway, the com-
pany is first called to prayer, and a candle or lamp lit with a blessing and a verse of Scripture. A grace is then said, blessing God for food and drink. At the end of the meal the couple renew their commitment to each other with a formula which is informal and quite personal in tone. The rite closes with a prayer of blessing said by the couple together and a toast from the assembled company.

Invocation to prayer
Scripture verse
Blessing of food and drink
Meal
Renewal of commitment
Blessing prayer
Toast

Celebrating an Anniversary in Church

A couple may wish to combine a domestic celebration of their wedding anniversary with a liturgy of renewal and thanksgiving in church. This may be celebrated within Mass, with a priest as presiding minister, or within a liturgy of the word with a priest or deacon as presider.

Introductory rites
Liturgy of the word
Rite of renewal
   Calling of the couple
   Short address
   Renewal of commitment
   Prayer of the couple
   Intercessions
   Blessing prayer
   Sign of peace
Liturgy of the eucharist
Concluding rites

Reconciliation in the Home

In the course of time, relations between a couple or within a family may become strained or damaged by disputes, absence, real or imagined wrongs. Hurts, anger and estrangement may be the result. The malaise may be deeply felt, and the need for healing recognized, but there will often be an inability to articulate matters. This rite is intended to provide a structure and forms of words through which it may be possible to name the wrong, bring things to the surface, and restore relationships in a supportive context.

Sentence of blessing
Scripture reading
Reflection
Confession of sin
Invitation
General confession
Mutual confession (option)
Individual confession and absolution (option)
Recommitment (option)
Lord’s Prayer
Prayer of the couple (or family)
Blessing prayer
Kiss of peace

Blessing for a Family or Household

There are many occasions on which families or households may wish to celebrate simple liturgies in the home; these are often referred to as “blessings.”
The wedding liturgy set out in the *Proposed Order of Christian Marriage* can be put into use almost immediately when the new ritual book becomes available. It is not a radical departure from present practice but rather a logical development. The hope is, however, that the quality of its preparation and celebration continues to improve. Pastoral ministers will need to become familiar with the new rite, its pastoral notes, and the many options provided. Music ministers likewise will wish to study the new musical opportunities provided.

The catechumenal dimension of the *Proposed Order of Christian Marriage* is another matter. It is innovative and visionary, and only a few parishes are likely to be prepared to implement it immediately. Remember that although the RCIA was first published in 1972, it was roughly twenty years before it became very common in parishes; even today it is not celebrated everywhere.

The drafting committee expects that it will be five to ten years before the marriage catechumenate becomes very common. Most likely, it will first be used in parishes that have had considerable experience with the RCIA and have come to understand and appreciate the great blessings that come from this kind of liturgical experience.

For this five to ten year period, the marriage catechumenate will need to be studied locally, regionally and nationally, and some of its individual liturgies put into use, even out of full context. Parochial and diocesan ministers of marriage preparation as well as liturgists and other pastoral ministers will need to be converted to this new approach. As with the RCIA, it would be a serious mistake simply to put a new label on marriage preparation without changing its fundamental approach and mentality.

Though a new challenge for the Church—already heavily burdened sometimes with its present needs—the marriage catechumenate is also a wonderful opportunity and blessing.
Music in the Wedding Liturgy

The focus of a wedding liturgy, like all liturgy of the Church, is first of all the worship of God. Music is an essential element of that worship and is therefore an integral part of all liturgy. Music in the wedding liturgy enables those gathered to express their faith and to enter into the worship of God; music expresses thanksgiving for the mystery of the love that God has created and transforms through this sacrament. It creates an atmosphere of celebration, joy, and unity in the gathered assembly.

Appropriate hymns, psalms, acclamations, and instrumental music enhance and sustain the ritual elements of the marriage celebration. The principles used in choosing music for any liturgical celebration of the Church apply also to the wedding celebration. The music chosen will then both support the ritual of marriage and encourage the full, active, conscious and fruitful participation of those assembled.

Some guidelines

1. Since the wedding liturgy is an act of worship by the gathered community and is a celebration of the parish community, the music used should be an expression of the worship of that community; that is, an expression of praise and thanksgiving to God.

2. The couple will want those who come to the wedding liturgy to enter into the celebration by participating as fully as possible in the ritual. A well chosen program of music can draw people into the celebration with heart, mind and spirit in a way that nothing else can. Therefore, music which they can sing should be chosen, rather than music which is intended just for listening.

3. The norm for wedding celebrations, and for all liturgical celebrations, is the celebration of parish's Sunday liturgy. Therefore, if a couple does not attend the Sunday liturgy in the parish where they intend to celebrate their wedding, it is a good idea to do so for some time before the wedding in order to become familiar with the repertoire of the parish. For this reason the couple should approach the parish's music ministry to plan the music for their own wedding; the music should be for the most part music which is used on Sundays.

4. Singers and other musicians must be aware that they are not on stage and that they are not there to entertain; their role is to serve the worship of the community, and their placement and deportment should make this clear. Individuals who sing alone are not "soloists" as such but function as cantors, that is, as "animators" of the assembly's song; their role is to sing the responsorial psalm (with all participating in the refrain) and any other parts that are appropriately led by one voice (such as a communion song or a Lamb of God litany with verses for the cantor or choir and a refrain for the assembly).

5. Instrumental music has a place in the wedding liturgy, such as the processional (which can be followed by an entrance or gathering song) and the recessional at the end. Music used in films or daytime TV for weddings, is not an appropriate model. Music before and after the liturgy adds much to the celebration.

6. Taped music or any other form of recorded music replacing the sung prayer in the liturgy is unacceptable. The liturgy is the action of the people who are there to worship, and music which is not "live" contradicts what the liturgy is meant to be.

7. The bride and the groom should plan the music together with the parish's music ministry. It is best that the couple choose...
Music in the Wedding Liturgy

the scripture readings for the liturgy first, so that the readings can be reflected in the music chosen.

8. When making the choices for music, there are several points to keep in mind.

a) The selection should fit its particular function in the rite.
   - The responsorial psalm is an important sung part of the liturgy. There are a number of suggestions given in the lectionary, and most of them have musical settings in various hymnals.
   - The gospel acclamation, the eucharistic acclamation and the Lamb of God (if Eucharist is celebrated), are also important ritual music. The settings used should be familiar to those present; they are never sung by a soloist alone.
   - The opening or gathering song should be a lively and joyful song of praise and thanksgiving to God. (This song is better sung after the entrance procession so that all can participate.)
   - If the Eucharist is celebrated, a communion song is to be sung, and the song should be about what the community is doing at that time, sharing the body and blood of Christ. The best form for this song is a setting which has a refrain for the community to sing. “Ave Maria” by a soloist or any other Marian song does not fit this part of the rite.

b) If a couple wishes to use a Marian song, or any other suitable religious song that does not suit the liturgy, it may be used during the signing of the civil documents or before the liturgy.

c) Songs which are not found in our approved hymnals should be examined carefully to see if the text is appropriate for use in the liturgy. The following questions can be used as a guide.
   - Will this song enhance the worship of the community, and will it help all present to open themselves to God—or will it focus the community away from God’s action.
   - Is the song appropriate for a celebration of a sacrament of the Church, and do the words express a Christian view of love? Does the text express the Catholic Church’s understanding of married love? The introduction to the Marriage rite declares the appropriate teaching.
   - Does the text speak inclusively about men and women?
   - Does the song fit the part of the rite for which it is intended, and does the music draw people into real participation?
   - Has the piece been over-used?
   - Is the song within the musical ability of those who are to sing and play it?

If a love song makes a reference to God, it is not necessarily appropriate for an act of worship. Worship expresses praise to God who loves us. An expression of love that focuses on the physical and emotional aspects conveys only half of the wonder of Christian marriage. Texts which use the first person (for example, the bride and groom addressing each other) are not suitable for the prayer of a community.

d) The melodies of the songs should also be considered carefully. Simply changing the words of a song which has a different context is not sufficient. The melody itself has a great influence at a sub-conscious level. The Christian mystery of love can be quite insidiously subverted by tunes which are used elsewhere, for example, in stage or screen productions.

9. There may be pieces of music, such as love songs, which are significant for a couple, but which are not suitable for the liturgy. These pieces are much more appropriate at another event during the wedding day, such as the reception or the banquet and they will receive better attention at such a time.

Suggestions for Music at a Wedding Liturgy

The selections suggested here are not considered a comprehensive list; they are a guide for mak-
ing appropriate choices in both text and style of music. Although the list is chosen from a few specific hymnals, many of the selections listed can be found in other hymnals that a parish may be using, such as Breaking Bread (Oregon Catholic Press), or Worship and Gather (G.I.A. Publications, Inc.). A perusal of the indices of these and other hymnals will bring to light other appropriate choices.

Opening Song
The opening song may be sung after the entrance procession, when all are in their places.

From Catholic Book of Worship III

God, who blesses new beginnings 626
Joyful, joyful we adore you 511
Love divine, all loves excelling 625
*As we gather at your table 583
Canticle of the sun 542
*Christians, lift up your hearts 585
*Church of God 581
Come, rejoice before your maker 577
*Gather us in 587
God is alive 591
God is love! The heavens are telling 560
God, the Spirit, guide and guardian 510
How great the signs of God’s love 615
Let all the earth cry out 589
O bless the Lord 562
O praise the Lord, sing unto God 593
Wondrous is your name 632

From Catholic Book of Worship II

All creatures of our God 620
All people that on earth do dwell 621
Alleluia, give thanks 496
Bless the Lord 626
Glorious God 628
Glory be to God the Father 528
God created earth and heaven 625
God, who gives to life its goodness 643
May the grace of Christ 596
Strong is God’s love for us 428

From Glory and Praise (Numbers, and titles, in parenthesis refer to the comprehensive edition.)

All my days 2 (7)
Anthem 83 (19)
City of God 187 (47)
For you are my God 16 (77)
Glory and praise to our God 17 (82)
If God is for us 25 (111)
Sing a new song 47 (218)
Sing to the mountains 48 (227)
(Gather us in 79)
(Rejoice to the full 205)

Responsorial Psalm

From Catholic Book of Worship III (Numbers in parenthesis are from CBW II.)

Psalm 128: 33, 191, 208, 628 (129, 308, 325, 431)
Psalm 33: 47, 77, 100, 109, 168 (35, 140, 182, 213, 224, 285, 314)
Psalm 34: 55, 167, 170, 173, 201, 221, 610 (148, 230, 284, 287, 290, 318, 333, 413–15, 668)
Psalm 103: 52, 130, 181, 217, 225A, 565 (36, 145, 247, 298, 627)
Psalm 145: 102, 151, 161, 163, 184, 204, 574 (215, 268, 278, 280, 301)

From Glory and Praise (Numbers in parentheses refer to the comprehensive edition.)

Psalm 128: We praise you 154 (254)
Psalm 34: Come, my children 189 (50)
(Psalm 33: Song of the chosen 203)
(Psalm 145: Praise God 201)

Gospel Acclamation

(Number in parenthesis are from CBW II)

Selected verses for the gospel acclamation can be found in Catholic Book of Worship III, no. 696 (no. 37). For settings of the acclamation itself, see CBW III, nos. 247–65 (351–64) or Glory and Praise, no. 162–65. (During Lent the “alleluia” is not used.)

* The selection is appropriate only if the Eucharist is being celebrated.
Music in the Wedding Liturgy

Rite of Marriage

Although the present ritual does not suggest any acclamations during the rite of marriage itself, several acclamations (songs of praise) added at appropriate moments will provide an opportunity to express joy and festivity as well as reverence and awe appropriate to the occasion. These also provide an opportunity for all to participate and invite their participation throughout the rite of marriage.

At the beginning of the rite

While the presider, the couple and the attendants take their positions for the rite, a short song of praise may be sung. One of the following is recommended.

(The refrain in each case may be sung first by a cantor and repeated by the assembly.)

1) God is love, CBW III, no. 473, refrain only
2) We praise you, O Lord, CBW III, no. 633
3) Praise God, from whom all blessings flow, CBW III, no. 579A
4) Rejoice in God, CBW III, no. 580, final verse.

After the exchange of vows and the presider's affirmation

(The refrain in each case may be sung first by a cantor and repeated by the assembly.)

1) Who calls you by name, CBW III, no. 618, refrain only
2) Bless the Lord, CBW III, no. 684, refrain only, with the text given or with one of the following alternatives.
   – Glory and praise to you, our God.
   – Blessed be God for evermore.
3) Psalm 103

After the nuptial blessing

(The refrain in each case may be sung first by a cantor and repeated by the assembly.)

1) Remember your love, GP, no. 134, first four bars of the refrain
2) Who calls you by name, CBW III, no. 618, refrain only
3) Strong is God's love for us, CBW III, no. 546, refrain only
4) Canticle, CBW III, no. 108, refrain only

Preparation of Gifts

Suitable instrumental music or a piece sung by a choir is appropriate during this time; if a song by the assembly is chosen, the following are some suggestions. (Choirs may also choose to sing one of the following in a choral setting.)

From Catholic Book of Worship III

**Come, Lord Jesus 627
**Where there is love 631
**Blest are they 522
When love is found 629
Sing of One who walks beside us 405
To Abraham and Sarah 519
Break not the circle 524
Lord, you search me 474
Lord, whose love in humble service 507
God, whose love in Jesus found us 501
For the beauty of the earth 531
Lord, make us servants of your peace 630
Ubi caritas 67
The song of the beatitudes 523

From Catholic Book of Worship II

**O perfect love 598
**God of love, O God of goodness 597
**Love live with you 595
**Tell out, my soul 638

From Glory and Praise (Numbers in parenthesis refer to the comprehensive edition.)

All that we have 82 (10)
At all times 179
Be glad, O people 253
**Beginning today 183
Come now, my love 257
**For everything there is a time 191 (75)

** This selection is also appropriate for singing during the signing of the civil document at the end of the liturgy.

236 • National Bulletin on Liturgy
**Like a seal on your heart 34 (144)
**The love of God 218
Man and woman 135
**Only a shadow 38 (181)
Shalom 137
**A time for building bridges 56

**Communion Song**
(The communion song is to begin right after the invitation to communion, while the presider is receiving communion.)

From Catholic Book of Worship III
(Numbers, and titles, in parenthesis are from CBW II.)

Bless the Lord 684
Blest are they 522
Bread of life 597
Christians, let us love 595 (572)
Eat this bread 602
Gather us together 601
Gentle shepherd 598
Gift of finest wheat 603 (570)
I am the living bread 605
No greater love 599
Now in this banquet 608
Our daily bread 600
Seed, scattered and sown 604
Take and eat 611
Taste and see 610
The song of beatitudes 523
Where there is love 631
Here I am, Lord 520
(Dwelling place 710)
(I will celebrate your love 644)

From Glory and Praise (Numbers in parentheses refer to the comprehensive edition.)

Something which is known 267
I have loved you 104 (103)
**On eagle’s wings 126 (178)
Our blessing cup 129 (184)
One bread, one body 127 (180)
Peace prayer 40 (191)
You are near 59 (287)

**Conclusion**
During the signing of the civil documents, suitable instrumental music may be played, or a song sung by a choir, a soloist, or the assembly may be chosen. Some suggestions have already been indicated above. Some further suggestions are given below.

From Glory and Praise (Numbers in parentheses refer to the comprehensive edition.)

Rainbow 232
Wherever you go 273
Service 123 (216)
My soul rejoices 123 (166)
Hail Mary, gentle woman 20 (87)
(You are child 271)

During the final procession to the back of the church, an instrumental postlude is most appropriate. However, if a song for the assembly is chosen, it should be vigorous and joyful. Many of those suggested for the opening song are appropriate. Some further suggestions are given here.

From Catholic Book of Worship III

God, who give to life its goodness 559 (643)
O sing to God 544
Praise to the Lord 568 (653)
Sing to the Lord 569
Sent forth by God’s blessing 533
You are the voice 576

**Appropriate Music from Other Sources**

**Selections for a choir**
If a choir is to participate in a wedding liturgy, its primary function is to support the singing of the assembly. But it may also wish to sing more complicated music without the assembly at appropriate times, such as before the entrance procession begins, during the preparation of gifts if the Eucharist is celebrated, and during the signing of documents. At other times, when the singing belongs to the assembly, the choir may enhance the music by adding some harmony to the melody.

There is a wealth of choral music available from the various publishers, but a short list is given here.

Blessing prayer, David Haas (G.I.A. Publications, Inc.)
Music in the Wedding Liturgy

The love God has for us, SATB, Randolph Currie (G.I.A. Publications, Inc.)
Four hymns for weddings, unison or two-voice choirs, Carroll Thomas Andrews (G.I.A. Publications, Inc.)
Blest are they, David Haas (G.I.A. Publications, Inc.)
Where there is love, cantor or SATB choir, Howard Hughes (G.I.A. Publications, Inc.)
Great is the Lord, SATB, Paul Inwood (OCP Publications, Portland OR)
Send us as your blessing, Lord, SATB, Christopher Walker (OCP Publications, Portland OR)
O blessed are those, SATB, Paul Inwood (OCP Publications, Portland OR)

From Music for Wedding Services: An Ecumenical Collection (Novalis)
This publication includes a musician's copy, a congregational booklet, a planner for engaged couples, and an audio cassette demonstrating the selections included in the collection.
Ave Maria, three settings (best during the signing of documents)
Ave Verum, Panis Angelicus (best after but not during communion, or during the signing of documents)
Blessed are you who love the Lord (preparation of gifts or signing of documents)
Bridal prayer (preparation of gifts or signing of documents)

No greater love than this (communion or signing of documents)
Where there is love (signing of documents)
Your goodness, O God (communion)
A nuptial blessing (to be used only when the presider sings the parts designated for the presider)
God, we praise you (opening song)
God of love and joy and laughter (opening song)

Organ Music
The Constitution on the Liturgy states that any instrument can be used for the liturgy as long as it is suitable, or can be made suitable, for sacred use and will "truly contribute to the uplifting of the faithful" (no. 120). The organ provides depth of sound and festive colour for processions. It also leads the assembly well by clarifying the melody. Other ensembles of keyboard, guitars, flutes, etc., provide a warmth of sound and rhythmic vitality. A single guitarist/cantor requires significant amplification to lead the assembly. Alternatively a small choral ensemble can strengthen the leadership. Instrumental music, either in total or intermingled with vocal selections, before the liturgy begins can help to create a spirit of joy and anticipation and yet reverence and awe for what is about to happen.

The list of suggestions given here is by no means a comprehensive list, since there is so much music available. This list is intended simply as a guide to the kind of music that is appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bach, J.S.</td>
<td>Jesu, Joy</td>
<td>Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bach, J.S.</td>
<td>Preludes and Fugues</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bach, J.S.</td>
<td>Sheep May Safely Graze (Cantata 208)</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bales, G.</td>
<td>Petite Suite: Intermezzo</td>
<td>Berandol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composers</td>
<td>Pieces</td>
<td>Publishers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handel, G.</td>
<td>Air (from <em>Water Music)</em></td>
<td>Novalis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held, Wilbur</td>
<td>Awake My Heart with Gladness</td>
<td>Novello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Come Down, O Love Divine*</td>
<td>Novalis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holy God, We Praise Thy Name</td>
<td>Novello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mendelssohn, F.</td>
<td>Sonatas (excerpts)</td>
<td>Novello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pachelbel, J.</td>
<td>Canon in D</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowley, A.</td>
<td>Benedictus</td>
<td>Novello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley, J.</td>
<td>Thirty Voluntaries (various movements)*</td>
<td>Novalis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitlock, P.</td>
<td>Fidelis (four extemporizations)</td>
<td>Oxford</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Processional music**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composers</th>
<th>Pieces</th>
<th>Publishers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bach/Vivaldi</td>
<td>Concerto in A minor, first movement</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beethoven/Hare</td>
<td>Hymn to Joy</td>
<td>Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campra, A.</td>
<td><strong>Rigadoon</strong></td>
<td>Theodore Presser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(For two manuals only)</td>
<td>Flammer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcello</td>
<td><strong>Psalm 19: The Heavens Declare</strong></td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handel, G.</td>
<td>Allegro (from <em>Water Music</em>)</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marche (from <em>The Occasional Oratorio</em>)</td>
<td>Novalis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Processional (from <em>Water Music</em>)</td>
<td>Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haydn, F.</td>
<td>St. Anthony’s Chorale*</td>
<td>Gordon V. Thompson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near, G.</td>
<td>A Wedding Processional</td>
<td>H.W. Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purcell (J. Clarke)</td>
<td><strong>The Prince of Denmarke’s Marche</strong></td>
<td>Novalis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Trumpet Voluntary)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Trumpet Tune</strong></td>
<td>Novalis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pachelbel</td>
<td><strong>Toccata in E minor</strong></td>
<td>Boosey and Hawkes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wetzler, R.</td>
<td>Processional in Westminster Abbey</td>
<td>Concordia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**This selection is also suitable at the end as a final processional.**

Note: The “Bridal Chorus” (“Here Comes the Bride”) and Mendelssohn’s “Wedding March” are not suitable for a Christian wedding because the original context of both pieces is an opera featuring a pagan wedding celebration.
Final processions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Piece Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bales, G.</td>
<td>Petite Suite: Finale</td>
<td>Berlandol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clokey, C.</td>
<td>Recessional (Wedding Suite)</td>
<td>Fisher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franck, C.</td>
<td>Finale in B flat</td>
<td>Schirmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handel, G.</td>
<td>Hornpipe (from Water Music)*</td>
<td>Novantis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karg-Erert</td>
<td>Now Thank We All Our God</td>
<td>Schirmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>Trumpet Voluntary*</td>
<td>Novantis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vierne, L.</td>
<td>Symphony I: Finale</td>
<td>Belwin Mills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widor, C.M.</td>
<td>Symphony V: Toccata</td>
<td>Alphonse Leduc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willan, H.</td>
<td>Finale Jubilante (Organ Music of Canada, vol. 1)</td>
<td>Berlandol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This selection is included in Music for Wedding Services: An Ecumenical Collection (Novantis, 1993)

Collections of Wedding Music


Wedding Music. Part I and II. Concordia Publishing House. Part I includes twenty-three wedding pieces by such composers as Buxtehude, Pachelbel, Bach, Handel, Marcello, Stanley, and Wesley, with a classified index. Part II contains sixteen hymn-tune preludes by various composers.

Wedding Music. In two volumes. Composed, edited, arranged by David N. Johnson. Augsburg Publishing House. Some compositions include optional parts for an instrument such as the flute, trumpet, or violin.

Other Collections with Suitable Music


For Manuals Only. Edited by John Christopher. McAfee Music Corporation, New York.


Old English Organ Music for Manuals. In six volumes. Editor, C.H. Trevor. Oxford University Press. This collection is highly recommended for playing not only at weddings but for other services.


Collections of Wedding Music for Trumpet and Organ


Liturgical Ministry, Faith, and Discernment

Mary M. Schaefer

This article explores in more detail the liturgical ministries that are part of worship, the work of God’s people, that was touched on in the article that appeared in the last issue of the bulletin, “Building Communities of Faith, Building the Church” (Bulletin 154, pp. 144-55).

The centrality of faith

Liturgical ministries are intended to facilitate the communal praise of God. Members of the community experience them in faith terms. Like it or not, liturgical ministers are judged by the degree of faith and love which they make palpable. The assembly’s comments may not be expressed theologically, but their experience will infallibly relate to how a ministry engages faith. Liturgical ministries actualize by word, gesture and action the faith life of the entire community.

In liturgical-sacramental worship, Christ, the Spirit, and the Church collaborate in the sacrifice of praise so that all are open to receive God’s self-communication. Where Christ’s disciples gather in his name, there is Christ. Only one thing is necessary: faith. But if Christ is given “visibility” in the sacramental acts of the Church, the mutual active presence of Christ in the Spirit is directly related to the faith exchanged among believers in these acts of corporate faith. The credibility of the messenger affects the credibility of the message. What makes the liturgy different from other instances of the personal presence of Christ is that when one mode for the building up of faith is inadequately expressed, there are others which can supply. If a liturgical celebration utilizes the media of human communication well, opportunities for the increase of faith are available in superabundance.... May each believer find in any celebration at least one ministry which stimulates rather than discourages faith!

Grace is bestowed gratuitously and abundantly, but never cheaply or as a matter of course. As with the sacraments, communication of faith does not happen automatically or by magic. Christ is actively present in the Spirit only when there occurs a “faith exchange.” The gift of the Spirit requires the personal engagement of prayer, discipline, self-denial, growth through participation, and making way for others.

Except for those occasions when Christians are called upon for witness, faith may be misconstrued as an invisible,

1 This reflection is stimulated by the centrality of faith in the systematic theology of liturgy developed by Edward J. Kilmartin, especially in Christian Liturgy: Theology and Practice. 1 Systematic Theology of Liturgy (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1988).

2 Of course, Christ is present in other modes. Christ is always present in the cosmos; Christ is present habitually in believers. With respect to the “substantial” presence of Christ, theologians now see that it cannot be separated from mutual active presence.

Dr. Mary M. Schaefer is Associate Professor of Christian Worship and Spirituality at the Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax.

242 • National Bulletin on Liturgy
internal assent of mind and will to God that need not manifest itself externally. From the perspective of psychology of religion, Antoine Vergote sees the matter differently; faith is achieved in expression, and liturgy is faith in symbolic act. If this is so, how essential faith-filled liturgy is to believers. Faith which is poorly expressed encourages the loss of faith.

A discernment model

The approach taken by many parishes to filling ministerial roles seems to be governed by the pre-Vatican II concepts that worship fulfills individual duty to God and attention to liturgical law “guarantees” the offer of grace. Individualism rather than action as the body of Christ, ritualism instead of rituals imbued with personal and corporate faith, volunteerism instead of discernment of gifts indicate the transfer of scholastic theory (which had been formulated in terms of the priest and merely presumed a faith context) to the laity and their new-found active participation. If parishes act as though their work is done once sufficient numbers of volunteers have “signed up” or been appointed to the various liturgical roles, if almost anybody is assumed to be capable of doing almost anything, then a democratic rather than a theological principle is at work. Such is the case when a parish has failed to put in place a communal discernment and growth process.

Parishes would do well to ask themselves the hard question whether a true liturgical ministry (a service which builds up the faith community) can exist unless it expresses a gift of grace. A liturgical ministry is always more than the expression of an individual’s participation in the social group. It is never simply a matter of an individual’s offering God a talent. This would not be charis, grace bestowed gratuitously by the Spirit. If a ministry does not communicate the faith of the Church so as to build up the faith of the community, it cannot be a ministerial mode of Christ’s presence in faith and love. Doing is the visibility of being.

The ideal of active ministry by many always needs to be twinned with discernment of the ability to communicate faith in the way particular to a given ministry. Short of a miracle, no prayer of commissioning will enable the assembly to hear and assimilate a scripture reading which has been inadequately understood, articulated and proclaimed by an unprepared reader. Nor will installation in the communion ministry confer the ability to project a reverent welcome to each and every communicant so that they know it is really Christ offering himself in love. Ministers must not shy from striving to serve as a “transparency” for Christ.

Required is a whole process of discernment and development of aptitude and gifts of grace, of habits of preparation both practical and spiritual, of recognition of the essential inadequacy of human effort, and the authentic humility which allows Christ and not the minister to be preeminent. The sequence of the theological and pastoral questions to be addressed goes something like this. How does an ecclesial community discern the various gifts God has bestowed for building up the faith community? (Such discernment provides ample occasions for authentic humility.) Once discerned, how do we prepare persons to carry out their ministry compe-

3 “Apart from the gestures that put it into effect, love does not exist.... Similarly, with is expressed and achieved in word and gesture, precisely because it too is encounter brought about with the Other who is God.... Faith is not just a ‘condition’ for the efficacy of the sacraments; it is achieved in the gesture and the word which, by this fact, are operative in the relationship with God. Thus the liturgical gesture is faith in action. Faith ... is a disposition towards God which is actualized only in expression.” Antoine Vergote, “Symbolic Actions and Gestures in the Liturgy,” Liturgy in Transition, ed. Herman Schmidt, Concilium, no. 62 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), pp. 42–43.

tently and with faith and love? Finally, how does the parish assist ministers to manifest their faith and love as they exercise a liturgical ministry? (The development of a liturgically-based spirituality is required.) For its part, how does a community grow in the ability to hear, respond to and receive the gift of grace unless persons model dedicated response in their ministerial service? (The virtues of humility, generosity and rejoicing in others' gifts require cultivation.)

It is usually counter-productive to install persons in liturgical ministries prior to providing an adequate introduction to the meaning, requirements, and skills of the ministry, together with acclimatization to group work and discernment. How are a person's gifts to be authentically discerned? Once engaged in a ministry for which they are unsuitable, how are these persons to be invited to turn to another? And how will they gain the experience of that "overplus of grace" which comes from receiving and exercising what is totally God's gift and not the result of their human initiative?

It is demanding for a parish to develop and sustain a model of communal discernment and development of gifts. The ordained leader, with other persons responsible for liturgical ministries in the parish, must identify God's gracious gift "in the rough," assist the development of a minister's natural ability, and support growth in the quality of the faith-expression in each and every ministry.

Symbol and reality, liturgy and life

A liturgical minister is never a mere "conduit" for the communication of Christ. A minister symbolizes the vocation of every member of the royal priesthood in which each is, in a unique way, called to be holy. The liturgical minister must be recognizable as one who embodies the Christian life with its ethical demands and call to continuing conversion. It follows that a ministry should be relinquished if the quality of life in Christ is wanting. One is either for or against Christ. Ministers function as real symbols of faith and love—if that is what they are outside the assembly. We are to worship God in spirit and in truth. No one can long hide the truth about themselves from the Church at prayer.

Rather than representing status or honour, truly authentic liturgical ministry is a symbolic expression of the gospel at work in daily life. Ministers of hospitality should be known for their spirit of welcome, ministers of the word for attentiveness to the good news abroad in the world and their courage in bringing gospel and culture into dialogue. Cantors, other singers and musicians lead the assembly in breathing forth the Spirit. Acolytes bring reverence to what are often regarded as menial and depersonalized tasks. Communion ministers should be exemplars of table hospitality. Those who shape the environment possess the appreciative consciousness which sees God's handiwork everywhere in creation.

Competence

Competence in using the verbal and non-verbal symbols of liturgy so as to evoke the faith response of others is essential to bringing about the various modes of the mutual active presence of Christ. This is a matter of much more than words. Since the introduction of liturgy in the vernacular, Roman Catholics have revelled in words, often with loss of the symbols and the silence which help members in their comprehension. However, more than fifty percent of communication is non-verbal. Some ministries entail no verbalization but require ease in public movement; for others the proclaimed work is paramount.

The text of a scripture passage or liturgical prayer represents the objective content of the Church's faith. Although God can never be bound by the rules of human communication, this content is best transmitted when the "sender" has first received it in faith. If the scriptural reading cannot be heard, or if its message is rendered
incomprehensible, or if the reader’s demeanor is careless or irreverent, Christ is not now actively present in the mode of the word. If then the assembly is impatient, is this a reflection on the hearers? Rather, does it not tell us how essential the communion arts are? A natural or acquired human expertise may not indicate a gift for use in public worship. If a theologian—and an able reader—does not proclaim the word of God in a way “anointed” by the Spirit and is unwilling to participate in the preparatory work which facilitates this ministry, that person is unsuitable. To come to this decision is no reflection on their life of discipleship, nor are they precluded from receiving the gift to proclaim the word at some other time.

Is the presider the true prayer leader and reconciler of this community? Are ministers of hospitality genuinely welcoming? Does the reader mean what she says? Is the homilist the first to hear what he preaches? Do the acolytes walk on holy ground? Do communion ministers radiate the self-giving which is Christ’s in the sacrament of love? Are all qualified by reason of following Christ to be the community’s “public persons” representing its faith? Have all developed the competencies which facilitate the ministry of public prayer without attracting undue attention to themselves? Are they prepared on this particular day? Can they serve as a “transparency” for Christ the shepherd, priest, servant, proclaimer, host?

Ordination to a public leadership role in the Church implies both a call from God and acknowledgement by the ecclesial community. On a much simpler scale the ministries which symbolize the faith and love of the assembly also require a sense of a call by God and recognition of this call by the community. Interior and external call has as an indicator the promise of competence. In the end, all is grace; a “graced” faith encounter is always attributable to God, not the human minister. Let us rejoice in the gifts God gives abundantly! 

On a Journey Towards the Father's House

The following excerpts are from a document prepared by the Vatican Liturgical Commission of the great Jubilee of the Year 2000.

1. The Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 is centred on the figure of Christ the Redeemer (cf. Tertio Millennio Adveniente, 39, hereafter, TMA). In fact, the basis and origin of the Christian faith is the historical event of Christ. But the mystery of Christ is made explicit in the Trinitarian mystery, that is the salvation of man (cf. John 1. 17-18). Starting from the entry of Jesus Christ into history, the divinity of God cannot be thought of but as the divinity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and this same divinity cannot appear but as salvation for us. While in Jesus of Nazareth God gives us the definitive meaning of history, at the same time he reveals himself to us as the Father who exists one and other with Jesus, the Son. And on the Cross which reveals, then, the perfect revelation of the dialogue of love between the divine Persons caught up in the plan of salvation, God, according to St. Paul, "did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us" (Romans 8. 32). The Father's plan is fulfilled in the Easter of the Son.

God the Father

4. The third and final preparatory year for the Great Jubilee of 2000 is dedicated to the Father (cf. TMA n. 49). God the Father, "fount of love" beginning without beginning, in his goodness and wisdom he set out the divine plan of salvation for all people, who originate from him and who are moving towards him.

Sacraments and Sacramentals

8. The sacraments are efficacious signs of the fidelity of the Father to the work of his hands. The living God of the Bible reveals himself as the God of the Covenant who binds his people to himself and communicates his gifts to them through ritualistic actions. The people of God are invited to respond with fidelity, justice and love to the faithful, just and benevolent Covenant of the Lord. The sacraments of the Church, "sacraments of the New Covenant" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1129, hereafter CCC), are placed in this context and reproduce the dialectic "The Father always hears the prayer of the Church of his Son, which, in the epiclesis of each sacrament, expresses her faith by the power of the Spirit" (CCC, no. 1127).

9. Baptism is the act of the Father who, by means of the Son, makes of himself a free and infinite gift to us in the Spirit. This demands conversion and faith, which is assent to the full revelation of God in Christ through the Spirit. This calls us above all to believe in the revelation of the paternity of God as "Abba": Baptism, the washing with water united to the Word, allows people to participate in God's life and become adopted children (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, 5, cf. CCC, no. 1213). As children of the Father, in analogy to the Incarnate Word, and sharing with him in the Holy Spirit, we have entered into a relationship of communion with all the Trinity. We have been baptized, in fact, "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Cf. Mt. 28, 19). In confirmation, we are confirmed with the richness of the gifts of the Spirit, the Paraclete, who strengthens and invigorates us so that we might carry out that which characterizes the messianic function of Christ in his redeeming sacrifice,
the supreme expression of service to mankind and fulfilling the will of the Father (cf. Rite of Confirmation).

10. The heart of the sacramental economy and the liturgy of the Church is the Eucharist and, in particular, the eucharistic prayer. The structure of this prayer, directed towards the Father, reflects, from earliest Christianity, the rule of the prayer and faith of the Church. The Church turns to the Father in continuity with the priestly prayer of Jesus: "Abba, Father!" The mystery of the Trinity rings out in liturgical prayer. It is based on the conviction that every good thing comes from the Father by means of Christ in the communion of the Holy Spirit, and thus everything must return to the Father by means of Christ in the Spirit. This theological scheme reflects the real movement of the history of salvation: from the Father, by means of the Son, in the Spirit, to the Father. The final doxology of the eucharistic prayer sums up the reasons for the praise that run through its development: to the Father, beginning and foundation of our salvation, who is owed all glory and honour that creation gives him through Christ in the Spirit (cf. Rm. 16. 27; 1 Tim. 1. 17). The assembly of the faithful intervenes with the "Amen," "which is the most important of the whole Mass" (Inaestimabile Donum, no. 4).

13. In the light of the history of salvation, Christian marriage constitutes an actualization of the "wonder" central to this history—the Covenant—in the time of the Church for the good of the Christian couple. They, consecrated in the sacrament (cf. the Preface of the Mass for Marriage), must "maintain and develop their conjugal union with that indivisible love, which has its source in the same love of God (Ordo celebrandi matrimonii, 9, hereafter OCM). In the procreation and education of children, the couple collaborate with the love of God the Father, Creator and Saviour, "who through them continually expands and increases his family" (OCM, 10).

14. In the consecratory prayer of the Rite of Ordination the Father is invoked so that, through the outpouring of his Spirit of holiness, the ordained faithfully take up the ministry they receive and by their example guide everyone towards an integral way of life. In this way, the ministers help build up the Church by means of the essential tasks of the missionary proclamation of the Gospel, the carrying out of spiritual worship to the glory of the Father and the collaboration in his growth in the world, in faith and love.

15. In the course of this year, we are invited to rediscover and to celebrate the deepest significance of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the richness and variety of the ways it can be celebrated. Penance is essentially about rekindling in us the love of the Father and to redirect us totally towards him: "the sinner who, moved by the grace of the merciful God, steps out on the way of penitence, and returns to the Father who "loves him first" [1 John 4. 19] (cf. Ordo Penitentiae, no. 5). From the texts of the Rite, and in particular for the formula of absolution, we find a rich Trinitarian doctrine which highlights, in a particular way, that the reconciliation of the penitent comes about by the mercy of the Father; he is presented as merciful love, that never ceases to call us to his Fatherly heart; he loves humanity even to the point of giving his Son, gifting his Spirit; he raised Jesus from the dead for our salvation.

16. Among the biblical readings proposed in the Rite of the Anointing of the Sick tracts from the Book of Job seem to be accented. The final teaching of this book puts into evidence the transcendent mystery of God the Father and shows how it is an impossibility for man to seek to understand God's plan for the world, and in particular, to make sense of suffering and death. In the mysterious experience of pain and infirmity, man has need of "special grace of God so that he does not lose heart, with the danger that the resulting temptation will sway his
On a Journey Towards the Father's House

faith” (Ordo Unctionus infirmorum eorumque pastoralis curae; no. 5). On the other hand, the Christian, tested by sickness, is invited by Saint Paul to live it as a sharing in the passion and death of Christ (cf. Rom 8. 17). In order to do this, the faithful who are ill are offered the grace of the Sacrament of Anointing, with the priest's imposition of hands, the prayer of the Church and the anointing with the oil sanctified by God's blessing.

17. God does not abandon us to the power of death. Thus the Church prays for the faithful departed who have travelled the road of their existence. In the funeral liturgy they are placed in God's hands, who is “the love that forgives,” so that they are welcomed into his house (cf. second Collect of the First Funeral Mass outside Easter). In the catechesis it is important to remind the faithful that, following the example of Christ, they are able to transform their death “into an act of obedience and love for the Father.” (CCC, no. 1011)

Prayer to the Father

38. In the Roman liturgy the prayers are generally directed to the Father. Saint Paul insists twice that we Christians are guided by the Spirit, and turn to God “crying Abba, Father.” (Rom 8. 15; Gal. 4. 6) It is this invocation that has its place within the liturgy, as is indicated by the use of the characteristic verb “to cry out.” We can ask ourselves how much Christians, when they pray, recognize the centrality of the Father. Experience tells us that the majority of the faithful are not aware of this aspect of faith except in a confused way, and in their prayer refer frequently to a kind of creator God found in natural theology. They are rarely aware that the object of their prayer is the Father of Jesus Christ. This third year of the preparatory triduum for the Jubilee of 2000, dedicated to the Father, can thus be the opportunity to rediscover the centrality of God the Father in Christian prayer and life.
GOD, CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, 
FATHER OF JESUS AND OUR FATHER

Blessed are you, Lord, Father in heaven, 
who, in your infinite mercy, 
stooped down to us in our distress 
and gave us Jesus, your Son, born of a woman, 
to be our Saviour and friend, our brother and redeemer. 
We thank you, good Father, 
for the gift of the Jubilee Year; 
make it a time of favour for us, 
the year of a great return to the father's house, 
where, full of love, you await your straying children 
to embrace them in your forgiveness 
and welcome them to your table, 
in their festive garments.

We praise you, Father, forever!

Father most merciful, 
during this Holy Year 
may our love for you and for our neighbour 
grow ever stronger: 
may Christ's disciples promote justice and peace; 
may they proclaim the Good News to the poor; 
and may the Church our Mother direct her love especially to the little ones and the neglected.

We praise you, Father, forever!

... continued
Prayer for the Third Year of Preparation for the Great Jubilee 2000

Father of justice,  
may the Great Jubilee be the fitting time  
for all Catholics to rediscover  
the joy of living by your word  
and obeying your will;  
may they know the goodness of fraternal communion,  
as they break bread together  
and praise you in hymns and inspired songs.

We praise you, Father, forever!

Father, rich in mercy,  
may the holy Jubilee be a time of openness,  
of dialogue and encounter,  
among all who believe in Christ  
and with the followers of other religions:  
in your immense love,  
be bountiful in mercy to all.

We praise you, Father, forever!

O God, Almighty Father,  
as we make our way to you,  
our ultimate destiny,  
may all your children experience  
the gentle company of Mary most holy,  
image of purest love,  
whom you chose to be Mother of Christ  
and Mother of the Church.

We praise you, Father, forever!

To you, Father of life,  
eternal source of all that is,  
highest good and everlasting light,  
be honour and glory, praise and thanksgiving,  
with the Son and with the Spirit,  
for ages unending. AMEN.

Ioannes Paulus PP. II
Index to Volume 31
(Nos. 152 – 155)

A

aboriginal persons, and the wedding liturgy, 155:206

ad libitum remarks, their place in the eucharistic liturgy, 153:121-126

anointing of the sick, and the transcendent mystery of God the Father, 155:247

architecture, symbol of, 154:163-164

art, qualities that make it worthy to be in the parish community, 154:137-138

art, religious, 154:135-136

art, sacred, 154:135-136

art, visual
- historical, in the Church, 154:132-135
- in the worship of the Church, 154:131-138

artist, vocation of, 154:136-137

assembly, as primary place of Christ’s presence, 154:152

B

baptism
- as the act of God the Father, 155:246
- confirmation and, 152:6, 7, 15, 16-17, 18, 19, 26
- follow-up for baptized children, 152:49-51
- preparation for, 152:49

baptized, role of the, 154:145-146

bishop
- historical role of in confirmation, 152:26-27
- historical role of in reconciliation, 152:27

breaking of the bread, 153:113-114

building and renovation
- diocesan commission for, 154:163-169
- fundraising for, 154:174-175
- principles to follow, 154:170-173
- stewardship and, 154:173-175
- things to do beforehand, 154:170-173
- ways to implement the reforms of Vatican II, 154:164-166

Catholic Book of Worship III
- music suggestions for celebrations of sacraments of initiation, 152:45-59
- preparation of, 154:182

charism, as ministry, 154:150

Christ, presence of, 154:146

collect, 153:91

communion
- from the cup, 153:116
- in the hand, 153:116
- of infants, 152:30

communion procession, 153:114-116

communion rite, 153:112-117

communion song, 153:116-117

concluding rites, 153:117-118

confirmation, 152:3-24
- adult initiation and, 152:18
- arguments supporting the unification of the rites of initiation, 152:17-18
- as a sacrament of coming of age, 152:16-17
Index to Volume 31

- baptism and, 152:6, 7, 15, 16-17, 18, 19, 26
- eucharist and, 152:14-16, 18, 22
- historical background on, 152:8-13
- in Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation, 152:14-15
- in Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 152:13
- in Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, 152:13-14
- in Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, 152:15-16
- infant baptism and, 152:18, 19-21
- liturgical-initiation school of thought and, 152:6-8
- mature, responsible commitment and, 152:16-17, 18-19, 23
- order of the sacraments of initiation, 152:7-8, 23
- preparation for, 152:23
- problems with it as it exists in the Church today, 152:5-21
- recent Church teaching on, 152:13-18
- reflections on, in pastoral practice, 152:22-24
- theological-maturity school of thought and, 152:6
- theology of the Holy Spirit and, 152:22-24
- entrance procession and psalm, 153:87-88
- eucharist (See also individual parts of the eucharist)
  - as celebration of the paschal mystery, 152:34
  - as centre of our spiritual lives, 152:31-36
  - as culmination of Christian initiation, 152:28-30
  - celebration of, 153:67-126
  - conversion and, 152:41
  - covenantal nature of, 152:33-34
  - evangelization and, 152:40
  - historical overview of, 153:71-82
  - introduction to, 153:69-70
  - list of resources on, 153:119-120
  - mystagogy and, 152:41-42
  - order of the celebration, 153:84-85
  - presence of Christ and, 153:83
  - Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and, 152:28
- eucharistic prayer, 153:105-111
  - as directed towards God the Father, 155:246
  - posture for, 153:106-107
- eucharistic spirituality, 152:31-36
- evangelization, and eucharist, 152:40

D
deaf persons, and the wedding liturgy, 155:206
diakonia, 154:151
disabilities, persons with, and the wedding liturgy, 155:206
dismissal, 153:118

E
Eastern Catholics, and the wedding liturgy, 155:206
elderly persons, and the wedding liturgy, 155:206
general intercessions, 153:97-99
Glory to God, 153:90-91
gospel, 153:95-96
gospel acclamation, 153:94
greeting, 153:88-89
greeting of peace, 153:113

H
Holy Spirit, second year of preparation for the Jubilee Year 2000, 152:3
homiletics, teaching of, 154:187-188
homily, purpose of, 153:96-97

I
ICEL, and Canadian liturgical publications, 152:60-61
incense, use of in the eucharist, 153:86-87, 104
introductory rites, 153:85-91

J
Jubilee Year 2000
– final preparatory year (1999) dedicated to God the Father, 155:246-248
– Holy Spirit, second year of preparation for the Jubilee Year 2000, 152:3
– Tertio Millennio Adveniente, 152:3

K
Kyrie eleison, 153:89-90

L
lectionary, Sunday and weekday, preparation of, 154:183-184
liturgical dance, ministry of, 154:176-177
liturgical ministry
– competency for, 155:244-245
– discernment model for, 155:242-245
– role of, 154:153-154
liturgical renewal
– formation for, 154:186-190
– history of in Canada, 152:51-52, 55-56
– Mississauga Statement (1994) on the state of liturgical renewal in Canada, 154:185-190
– preparing “second-generation” texts, 154:177-184
– role of ICEL in, 154:178-181
– role of the bishop in, 154:188-189
– role of the parish in, 154:189-190
– Vatican II and, 152:24-27
liturgical resources, preparing them for Canada, 152:56-64
liturgies
– for married life, 155:230-231
– within Proposed Order of Christian Marriage, 155:227-230
liturgy commissions, diocesan
– mandate and tasks, 154:164-168
– membership, 154:168-169
– resources for, 154:169
liturgy
– role of people in, 154:151
– symbolic communication of, 154:148-149
liturgy of the eucharist, 153:99-117
liturgy of the word, 153:92-99
liturgy, wedding (See wedding liturgy)
Lord’s Prayer, 153:112-113

M
marriage, Christian, 155:195-241
– as an action of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, 155:203-204
– as an actualization of the covenant, 155:246-247
– as participation in the paschal mystery, 155:203
– overview of the celebration, 155:200-201
– theology of, 155:201-208
marriage, interchurch, and the wedding liturgy, 155:207
married life, liturgies for, 155:230-231
Masses, with themes, 153:120
Mississauga Statement (1994) on the state of liturgical renewal in Canada, 154:185-190
music ministry
- accessibility, 154:162
- acoustical speakers, 154:161
- acoustics, 154:160-161
- architectural setting for, 154:156-162
- lighting for, 154:161-162
- locations for the ministry, 154:158-160
- pipe organ vs. "high-tech appliances", 154:156
- places for each different ministry, 154:157-158
- prerecorded music, 154:160
- rehearsal space, 154:162
- steps in designing a setting for, 154:156-157
- visual distractions and, 154:162
mystagogy, and eucharist, 152:41-42

N
National Liturgy Office, preparing liturgical resources for Canada, 152:56-64

O
opening prayer, 153:91
opening rites of the eucharist, 153:89-90
Order of Christian Funerals, revision of, 154:181-182
ordination, and invocation of God the Father, 155:247

P
parish community, as place for people of God, 154:145-146
penitential rite, 153:89
people of God, description of, 154:144-146
prayer
- for the gift of the Holy Spirit, 152:30
- to God the Father, 155:247
prayer after communion, 153:117
preparation of gifts, 153:99-105
profession of faith, 153:97

R
readings
- First Reading, 153:93
- Second Reading, 153:94
reconciliation, as rekindling in us the love of God the Father, 155:247
responsorial psalm, 153:93
Rite of Baptism for Children, revision of, 154:180-181
Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
- Canadian adaptation of, 154:179-180
- ways to nurture the parish assembly into a sponsoring community, 152:37-44
Rite of Confirmation, revision of, 154:180
Sacramentary, revision of, 154:184
sacraments of initiation
- Eastern churches and, 152:29
- music suggestions from Catholic Book of Worship III for celebrations, 152:45-49
- order of, 152:7-8, 23, 28-30, 31
- Vatican II and, 152:25-27
- Western churches and, 152:29
sign of the cross, 153:88
Sunday Celebration of the Word and Hours, 154:182-183

T
Tertio Millennio Adveniente, 152:3
*U*

unbaptized persons, and the wedding liturgy, 155:207-208

*V*

Vatican II

- liturgical renewal and, 152:24-27
- liturgy and, 152:53-54
- sacraments of initiation and, 152:25-27

veneration of the altar, 153:87

*W*

wedding liturgy

- adaptations for particular persons, 155:206-207
- concluding rites, 155:212
- dismissal, 155:213
- environment, 155:204
- immediate preparation for, 155:229-230
- introductory rites, 155:208-210
- liturgy of marriage, 155:210-212
- liturgy of the eucharist, 155:213-214
- liturgy of the word, 155:213
- ministries involved, 155:205
- music in, 155:204-205, 233-241
- nuptial blessing, 155:211-212
- participation by the assembly, 155:205
- posture and movement in, 155:210-211
- signing of civil documents, 155:212
- speech and silence in, 155:204
- symbols in, 155:204
- two forms for (within Mass or within a liturgy of the word), 155:205-206
- vows, exchange of, 155:211

witness, as work of God's people, 154:150

worship space

- best designs for, 154:143
- biblical understanding of, 154:139
- history of, 154:139-143
- modern, 154:142-143, 154-155
A Brief Book Review

The Sunday Lectionary: Ritual Word, Paschal Shape, by Normand Bonneau (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998); 175 pp., $14.95 U.S.

This book is bound to be helpful to those who prepare homilies and reflections on the Sunday and feast-day readings, and those who proclaim the word in their communities will certainly deepen their appreciation of the ministry they have. The book will heighten their understanding of how the lectionary unfolds the liturgical calendar and gives shape to the paschal mystery.

The author, an associate professor of New Testament at Saint Paul University in Ottawa, makes it clear that this book is not a commentary. He offers a theology of proclamation, a brief history of lectionaries, and describes the reform of Vatican II and the principles of this reform. He gives in a little more detail the structure of the Sundays, feast days, and seasons of the liturgical year and how these express the paschal mystery.

SALE of back issues of the NATIONAL BULLETIN ON LITURGY

Are you missing a particular issue of the Bulletin? Want to complete your set? Or enjoyed one particular issue and wish to give a copy to a friend? Now is your chance! We are offering back issues [nos. 36-151] at a special low price of $2.00 each.

If you wish to take advantage of this offer, you have two convenient ways to order:

Phone: Toll free (in Canada)
1-800-769-1147 or (613) 241-7538
Fax: (613) 241-5090

When ordering, customers should add to the price the GST (7%) after adding one of the following amounts for shipping and handling:

For orders of $99.99 and less: 8% ($2.00 minimum charge)
$100.00 to $999.99: 5%
$1,000.00 and more: Shipping costs only
Music for Lent, 
the Triduum and Easter Season

Catholic Book of Worship III – Volume 2

This second volume in the series of CBW III cassettes features 75 psalms, hymns and service music for Lent, the Triduum and Easter Season.

- CASSETTE 3 includes 43 selections: psalms and service music for Lent and the Triduum as well as hymns for Lent
- CASSETTE 4 contains 32 selections: hymns for the Triduum, psalms and hymns for Easter Season

$19.95
(set of two cassettes)

OTHER CASSETTES IN THE SERIES INCLUDE

VOLUME 1 (cassettes 1 & 2 – 54 selections): $19.95 per set
• responsorial psalms and hymns for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany

VOLUME 3 (cassette 5 – 78 selections): $19.95
• ritual songs, responses and acclamations used during the Sunday Eucharist

VOLUME 4 (cassettes 6 & 7 – 78 selections): $19.95 per set
• music for sacraments and rites

new VOLUME 5 (cassettes 8 & 9 – 76 selections): $19.95 per set
• music for the Liturgy of the Hours and Selections from Taizé

Use our toll-free number (1-800-769-1147) to call us about our interest-free financing option and other ways to beat the cost of implementation of CBW III.

Place your order with: PUBLICATIONS SERVICE (CCCB), 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1
Tel.: 1-800-769-1147 (613) 241-7538
Fax: (613) 241-5090

CATHOLIC BOOK OF WORSHIP III PRINT EDITIONS

CHOIR EDITION 1280 pages, 15 x 23 cm, sewn, hard cover, gold imprint: $34.95

PEW EDITION 816 pages, 13 x 19 cm, sewn, hard cover, gold imprint: $19.95

INSTRUMENTALIST EDITION 704 pages, 30.5 x 23 cm, two-page spread on each page, spiral binding: $75.00