

FROM FR. MARK:

Catholics in English-speaking countries are required (as of the feast of the Holy Family, December 30, 2016) to use the second edition of the Order of Celebrating Matrimony. The previous edition was one of the first ritual books published after the Second Vatican Council. The second edition has not only revised the translation, but it also includes new material. This new material has been available in Latin for more than 25 years, but it is only now appearing in English.

Best Practices for Procession

Receives and Warmly Greets. In both forms for beginning, the Church's minister is charged to receive the bridal party and warmly greet them. In the First Form (OCM, no. 45 within Mass and no. 80 without Mass) this takes place before the procession. In the Second Form (OCM, no. 49 and no. 84) this takes place after the procession. No ritual text or suggested words are given.

Best Practice. This greeting is not intended for all to hear. The principal minister is addressing either the bride and groom alone or the bridal party but no one else. In the First Form, this takes place in the gathering space, the entrance of the church, or the separate room(s) where the bridal party gathers and waits. In the Second Form, this happens after all have processed to their places.

After this, the entire assembly is greeted with the Sign of the Cross and liturgical Greeting in the usual way (OCM, no. 51 and no. 86).

The Procession. In either form, there is a procession that is either more robust or more simple. Sunday teaches us the procession order. The Latin edition and the Spanish edition for the USA add clear lists.

Best Practice. Here is a suggested order based on Sunday practice:

Incense bearer – if used

Cross bearer

Candle bearers (Servers)

Book of the Gospels – if used, carried by the Deacon or a Reader
Concelebrating Priests – if any
Priest

Bride and Groom

1. Bride and Groom walking together
2. Groom with parents; Bride with parents
3. Groom alone; then the Bride alone

In all these options

- a. The families may follow the priest
- b. And the rest of the Bridal Party may follow the families

Music during the Procession. Procession music is ritual music. Always. In both forms, within Mass and without Mass, the rubrics speak of the Entrance Chant (Hymn) in the singular (OCM, nos. 46, 50, and 81). One piece of music is envisioned as normative. There should be no change of music for the bride – bride and groom are equal partners in the covenantal relationship.

Best Practice. This is true: people in the assembly want to see the bride and groom and the other players who make up this festive procession. Here are some suitable options to provide for this while for this while remaining faithful to sacramental prayer.

One: Play an instrumental that accompanies the procession through the assembly followed by the Entrance Chant once all are in place.

Two: Sing the first two or three verses of the Entrance Chant, then the procession moves through the assembly accompanied by an instrumental that improvises the tune of the chant or is in harmony with it. Then all sing the final verse or the doxology of the chant once all are in place.

Three: Sing an Entrance Chant with a short, easy to remember assembly refrain that accompanies the entire procession.

In all of these ways, the whole assembly does its job of singing the Entrance Chant, the whole assembly also gets to visually participate in the pageantry of the procession, and all remain faithful to the Church's liturgical business – continually delving into the Paschal Mystery of the Lord Christ Jesus and sing its praise.

Diocesan Guidelines for the Procession Music: Excerpts from Your Wedding in the Catholic Church, Diocese of Belleville, July 2012.

Note: Bishop Edward K. Braxton issued these guidelines to assist not only parish priests and ministers but also the couple themselves. The following excerpts are helpful guides for faithful preparation and good celebration.

This document is found in the Pastoral Guidelines for Marriage Preparation, Diocese of Belleville.

See also *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* by the Committee on Divine Worship of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, approved in November 2007. See “The Rite of Marriage,” nos. 216-224.

MUSIC AT YOUR WEDDING LITURGY

Page 6. Music is a basic and integral part of Catholic Worship, and therefore also for your wedding celebration. Whether you exchange your vows during a Liturgy of the Word or a Mass, music is not a frill, but an important and basic element that cannot be overlooked when planning your wedding ceremony. There are parts of the celebration that need to be accompanied by music, and the most important times are those for congregational chant. Unfortunately in our recent history, this is usually the last type of music that couples consider. Allowing an organist, pianist or soloist to perform all of the music in your wedding is not compatible with Catholic Liturgy. Planning music in which the entire assembly can take part is a vital requirement when planning music for your celebration. It is important that the music fit the context of faith and dignity of the occasion. The texts should speak of a Christian concept of marriage, not focus on a romantic one. Every generation has its love songs, and some of them are great music. However, while they may have a place in your wedding day, they should be used outside of the wedding liturgy.

Liturgical Music is always performed live; therefore, recorded music is not appropriate for weddings.

It is also important to remember that your wedding day belongs to more than just the two of you. Those who have come to share the day with you want and deserve the opportunity to help you celebrate by lifting their hearts and voices in song. Let them be more than passive – let them celebrate with you, and select music to help them do that! Choose chants and refrains they can sing. By doing this, you give the assembly a sense that this is a celebration of joy where everyone can participate.

Selecting Your Musicians

Page 7. Very often, parishes have a list of their own musicians who have been trained and will be happy to assist you in planning and ministering the music for your wedding. In accord with the primary focus of the celebration, all instrumentalists and vocal musicians should fulfill their roles as ministers of the liturgy, and their location in the church needs to reflect this. It is also important that those serving as musicians for your wedding be truly competent. This competency includes a thorough understanding of the structure of the Catholic wedding liturgy. Too often, friends or relatives of the couple are asked to serve as musicians out of friendship rather than competency. You will also need to check with your musicians as to what their fee is, and when they would like you to remit payment to them.

Selecting Your Music

Page 7. The Church has set forth guidelines regarding the music in any liturgy, not just weddings, so the music you choose for your wedding should be evaluated in the same three areas: liturgical, pastoral, musical.

- Liturgical: Is the music appropriate to the liturgy and celebration? Songs which are appropriate for the reception or dance, or songs that originate from movie soundtracks, Broadway shows or top 40 radio are seldom appropriate for liturgy.
- Pastoral: Does the music allow for the assembly’s participation when appropriate?
- Musical: Is the music of quality and will it be done by competent musicians? Is it easily singable by the assembly?

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK