

Marriage FAQ

What are rules for weddings on Holy Days?

For weddings which fall on Holy Days of obligation, Solemnities (e.g., Immaculate Conception, Assumption, All Saints, St. Joseph, Sts. Peter and Paul, The Nativity of St. John the Baptist, The Most Sacred Heart, Mary Mother of the Church, Annunciation), and November 2nd, Ritual Masses are not permitted on these days. Therefore, the prayers and readings for the day must be used. The nuptial blessing is still allowed. (Order of Celebrating Matrimony).

Can Marriages be celebrated during Lent?

If marriages are to take place during Lent, couples are to be reminded that wedding plans should respect the special nature of this liturgical season; they should refrain from too much pomp or display (Order of Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours and Celebration of the Eucharist).

Does the Gloria have to be used at weddings?

Yes, The Gloria is included in the Nuptial Mass. This has been the case since the revision of the Roman Missal in 2011. The Gloria is always included in Nuptial Masses, even those that occur during Advent and Lent.

What are guidelines for weddings on Sunday?

In the Archdiocese of Saint Louis, Weddings are not allowed on Sunday except for the following: Military personnel, First responder personnel, and those involved in the catering business. The local ordinary must approve these and other exceptional cases.

If a Catholic marries a non-Catholic, can he/she still have a Mass?

Without express permission of the competent authority, a marriage is prohibited between two baptized persons of whom one is baptized in the Catholic Church or received into it after baptism and has not defected from it by a formal act and the other of whom is enrolled in a Church or ecclesial community not in full communion with the Catholic Church.

The local ordinary can grant a permission of this kind if there is a just and reasonable cause. He is not to grant it unless the following conditions have been fulfilled:

- The Catholic party is to declare that he or she is prepared to remove dangers of defecting from the faith and is to make a sincere promise to do all in his or her power so that all offspring are baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church.
- The other party is to be informed at an appropriate time about the promises which the Catholic party is to make, in such a way that it is certain that he or she is truly aware of the promise and obligation of the Catholic party.
- Both parties are to be instructed about the purposes and essential properties of marriage which neither of the contracting parties is to exclude (Canon 1124-1125).

Can a Catholic have a wedding in a non catholic building? (Outside, Parents house, restaurant, etc.)

The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony is a sacred covenant where we invite God into our marriage. For this reason, the wedding should be in a sacred space. Therefore, the practice of the Archdiocese of Saint Louis is to not grant permission for a Catholic wedding to take place in such locations.

Only one of us is Catholic. Can we still have Mass?

"Yes, but it is worth thinking carefully about this. If you want to have Mass, you will need permission from your bishop to do so. The Church says that when either the bride or groom is not Catholic the second or third form of celebration should be used unless pastoral concerns suggest otherwise. The wedding ceremony should be as inclusive as possible, and if one of you cannot receive Communion or if you will have a large number of non-Catholic guests, it is preferable to use one of the forms without Mass" (Champlin, Joseph M. *Together for Life* 6th edition. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria press, 2016.)

Where can I choose readings for my wedding?

The Order of Celebrating Matrimony included an expanded number of Lectionary readings that can be used at the Nuptial Mass, but almost all of these readings are included in the Lectionary (See Lectionary For Mass, Volume IV, #801-805). Non-Scripture readings are not permitted.

Can a Non-Catholic be a witness?

First of all, yes and no. According to the General Instruction for the lectionary for Mass; Liturgical tradition assigns responsibility for the biblical readings in the celebration of Mass to ministers ("49"). Therefore, If you choose a wedding within Mass a Catholic should proclaim the readings. If the Wedding is outside of Mass non-catholics may proclaim the readings. In either case the readers should be trained in the ministry couched ahead of time in the Church and given time to practice so that they are prepared.

What songs can take place at a wedding??

"Music has long been an integral part of any Catholic worship service. Since the purpose of the Church Weddings is to celebrate the religious dimension of marriage, the music especially needs to reflect that fact. Secular romantic pieces or popular songs are highly discouraged if not restricted. This directive includes the time of gathering prior to the procession and service. Only music suitable to the religious dimension of the wedding and the Catholic liturgy is considered proper. Even here, there is a certain ideal order of preference. Using the Sunday service as the model, the Church encourages the use of congregational hymns when possible and prefers musicians to support the traditional sung portions of the service prior to choosing any solo pieces. Suitable instrumental processions and recessions are certainly appropriate. Only when the above choices prove awkward for a particular event should the consideration of a soloist be considered. Again, even here music suitable to a church service is to be chosen. The Lord's prayer is always a communal prayer, never sung as a solo nor is a solo or hymn appropriate during the sign of peace. Individual parishes have certain directives concerning the proper musician for weddings. Couples are strongly encouraged to consult months in advance with the priest or pastoral musician responsible for the wedding to avoid any last minute confusion or disappointment." (The Catholic Wedding)

Is there a certain order for the procession of the marriage?

Yes, in the first form, the priest and ministers process to the door of the church, greet the bridal party, and they all process into the church. In the second form, the priest greets the couple after they have arrived at their place.

Either form allows for flexibility. While the first form does not describe the order for the liturgical procession, the following order seems most appropriate:

Prior to the Liturgical procession, it seems most appropriate for the following to process to their places;

- Grandparents

- Parents of the Groom
- Mother of the Bride with escort

Liturgical Procession

- Crucifix accompanied by candles, if available
- Servers
- Readers
- Priest and Deacon
- Wedding party (bridesmaids and groomsmen walking in pairs, including the Best Man and the Maid of Honor)
- Groom
- Bride escorted by her father or both parents

This arrangement expresses that the couple are the ministers of the Sacrament of Matrimony. There is more flexibility in the second form. This form allows for a variety of options for the couple and the priest to greet each other. The second form simply indicated that the couple and the priest all meet together, it does not specifically state how they get there. Therefore, if a couple wants a traditional bride's procession, the groom entering from the side, and the priest and other ministers entering from the sacristy, that is allowed. But, the couple could also decide to not have a formal procession and may simply take their places where they will be positioned for the liturgy.

Can vows be written by another source not from Catholic documents?

In Catholic wedding ceremonies there are several formulas for marriage vows that may be used, it is not allowed for couples to compose their own vows. For greater detail refer to the following source: <http://catholicweddinghelp.com/topics/catholic-wedding-vows.htm>