



God's Gift

Sacramental marriage is a "sign of ideal love for all the Church," Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen wrote in his 1982 pastoral letter on marriage. The Seattle archbishop added that "no other facet of human experience as aptly describes the passionate and unreserved quality of God's love for us." (NC News photo)

Liturgy Is Important In Marriage Ceremony

Marriage, by its very nature, is a most serious and sacred commitment. It is an intimate partnership requiring the total gift of oneself. Spouses are called on to draw closer to God and to each other in a lifegiving community of love. Christ enhanced the dignity of marriage by making the Christian marriage relationship a sacrament, a living sign of his love for the Church.

Following is the segment on Celebration of Marriage as outlined in the sacramental guidelines of the Diocese of Rochester in 1981:

A. In planning for the celebration of the Rite of Marriage, all who are involved should keep in mind that this is a liturgical and sacramental event. It is, therefore, a celebration of the faith community in which all are called to "full conscious and active participation," and to which all the principles of good liturgy apply.

B. Weddings should be planned in accord with their spiritual significance, and especially with good financial judgment consonant with the gospel.

C. The ordinary place for the celebration of Marriage is the parish church of the bride.

D. When Catholics of different rites marry, the ceremony takes place in the parish church of the groom.

E. When a Catholic and a person from another Christian communion marry, the ceremony would ordinarily take place in the parish church of the Catholic partner. However, for pastoral reasons, the ceremony may take place in the church of the non-Catholic partner, provided a dispensation is granted by the Pastoral Center.

• Weddings may also take

place in the interfaith chapels of campus parishes.

• If a wedding is desired in a place other than a sacred building, permission from the Pastoral Center is required.

F. The couple should be involved in the selection of the various options the Rite offers: processional, scripture readings, vows formula, nuptial blessing and other prayers, and music.

Scriptural readings are not to be replaced by readings from other texts.

If vows are especially written by the couple, the formula must be consistent with the ends of marriage.

G. Music should have a value and appropriateness in keeping with the dignity of this sacrament. The three criteria presented in "Music in Catholic Worship" should be used in the selection of music at weddings:

- is it good music?
- is it appropriate for the part of the liturgy for which it is used?

- can the congregation participate in it fully and prayerfully?

All three criteria should be applied together. If the music does not fit all criteria, it should not be used.

H. The diversity of liturgical ministers should be evident in the wedding ceremony. They should perform that and only that function which is appropriate to them (lectors, ushers, musicians, eucharistic ministers, presiders, servers.)

• The officiating priest or deacon must have faculties from the bishop, or delegation from the bishop or the priest in whose parish the marriage is taking place.

• The two witnesses are present, not only for the civil purposes, but for the support of the couple in this commitment of faith. The wit-

nesses should be of legal age, and be willing to help the couple in their new life together.

• Liturgical ministers may be selected from among the relatives and friends of the couple.

All liturgical ministers should have sufficient preparation and rehearsal.

I. When a Catholic and a baptized person of another Christian communion marry, various pastoral considerations may call for the celebration of Marriage without the Eucharist.

J. In planning the time for their wedding, a couple should be sensitive to the demands of the parish schedule. Likewise, priest deacons should make reasonable attempts to accommodate the schedule of the couple.

...THE TOAST...

Mervyn J. Huston in researching his book, "Toasts to the Bride and How to Propose Them" (from which many of our hints are taken), found that there is an increasing tendency to direct comments of the toast to the couple rather than to the bride. If the toast is to the bride, however, be sure to make some comments about the groom. He is getting married also and should not be the forgotten man, and don't overdo the part about how lucky he is.

Be Jitter Free

Pace yourself — don't plan to scout for reception sites the same day you have a report due at work. Promise yourself you won't tackle more than one major job a day.

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