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Professor of Theology
Loyola University Maryland

“Paul Turner is a sure and reliable commentator on the newly translated *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*. This paragraph-by-paragraph commentary is comprehensive, including in its view liturgy, history, translation, and custom. It is readable, pastorally useful, and delightfully interesting. Highly recommended.”

—Fr. Anthony Ruff, OSB
Associate Professor of Theology
Saint John’s University and School of Theology-Seminary

“*Inseparable Love* is Paul Turner at his best. Historical study is perfectly integrated into a theological account of the new translation of *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony*. The commentary on the various texts and rubrics are both pastorally and theologically rich. Even someone who has spent a lifetime studying the theology of the sacrament of marriage will discover something new in this volume. This in-depth commentary should be read by liturgical theologians, graduate students, those involved in marriage formation, and every member of the clergy.”

—Timothy P. O’Malley, PhD
Associate Professional Specialist
Director, Notre Dame Center for Liturgy
Institute for Church Life

“This book is a must-read for those who wish to seriously study and understand *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony* in all its intricate details. Pastors, deacons, catechists, liturgists, and musicians who prepare the engaged couple for the liturgy of marriage and prepare the liturgy for the worshiping community would benefit from this highly annotated and scholarly work. Fr. Turner leaves no stone unturned; he gives a thorough historical background to each and every paragraph of the OCM while at the same time providing a pastoral examination of present-day realities in the celebration of marriage.”

—Dolores Martinez

Liturgist and Music Minister, San Antonio, Texas

Paul Turner

Inseparable Love

A Commentary on
The Order of Celebrating Matrimony
in the Catholic Church

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AMICITIÆ MEMOR
TAM MARCI QVAM MICHELÆ AVERY
IN MVSICA NATÆ
IN VOCATIONE ALITÆ
IN MATRIMONIVM EORVM SIGILLATÆ
IN PVERIS EORVM ADORNATÆ
IN DOLORIBVS CONFIRMATÆ
IN FIDE, CONVIVIO, CIBO, RISO, AMOREQVE SVSTENTÆ
DEO GRATIAS DANS
HOC VOLVMEN DEDICAT AVCTOR

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Abbreviations

BB	<i>Book of Blessings</i>
CB	Ceremonial of Bishops
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CCT	Consultation on Common Texts
ETA	<i>Editio typica altera</i>
FC	<i>Familiaris Consortio</i>
GIRM	<i>General Instruction of the Roman Missal</i>
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i> , Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World
IO	<i>Inter œcumenici</i>
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i> , Dogmatic Constitution on the Church
LM	Lectionary for Mass
OCM	Order for Celebrating Matrimony
OCMAUS	Order for Celebrating Matrimony (Australia)
OCMEW	Order for Celebrating Matrimony (England and Wales)
OM	Roman Missal, Order of Mass
PL	Patrologia Latina
PRG	The Roman-Germanic Pontifical
RCIA	Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
SC	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> , Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy

Prologue

Love has measures. It always delights. It also demands.

Some love is transitory. It fascinates, then fails.

The greatest love penetrates the soul and expands the self. It blossoms unbidden, like a flower at dawn.

Love dismays reason. It defies explanation. People do not will love. They fall into it like gravity.

When two individuals against incalculable odds discover a mutual love, they lose its measure. Love's expression eludes their grasp. In vain they riffle the books of eternity searching for words.

They resort to symbols.

Since God is love, they ascribe their love to God. A church provides a finite venue to hold for an hour their immeasurable hearts.

There they will consent to love. There they will celebrate matrimony. There they will seal the bond that makes them one. Inseparable. As they are with God.

Preface

The Catholic Church numbers matrimony among its seven sacraments, ceremonies in which the people of God especially experience the presence of Christ. Engaged couples seeking marriage in the church find other arrangements inadequate for the love they intend to express. All weddings invite stress, and the parish that opens its doors to the engaged extends a much-needed sign of hospitality, mercy, and love.

The Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC), authorized a revision of the sacramental ceremonies of the church, including its order of matrimony. After Pope Paul VI established his Consilium for implementing the constitution, its members created a number of study groups to carry out the work in specific areas. Groups 22 and 23 received the charge to revise the Roman Ritual.

The members of group 22 on the sacraments were Balthasar Fischer (relator), Xavier Seumoï (secretary), Jacques Cellier (additional relator), Louis Ligier (additional secretary), Emil Lengeling, Frederick McManus, Ignacio Oñatibia, Boniface Luykx, Alois Stenzel, Joseph Lécuyer, and Jean-Baptiste Molin.

The members of group 23 on sacramentals were Pierre-Marie Gy (relator), Secondo Mazzarello, Jairo Mejia, Jean Rabau, Johannes Hopfinger, François Vandenbroucke, Damien Sicard, Antoine Chavasse, Bruno Löwenberg, and Korbinian Ritzer.¹ Other experts included bishop and theologian Carlo Colombo, who served on the advice of the Secretariat of State; Gianfrancesco Arrighi, who helped resolve ecumenical problems; Seumoï, who

¹ Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy, 1948–1975*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 579.

brought the voice of mission lands;² and Luigi Ciappi, theologian of the papal household.³

These two study groups began their work with the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and the Order of Christian Funerals. They then took up matrimony together with the Rite of Baptism for Children.⁴ The two study groups functioned as one for their work on matrimony and will be considered one study group for the sake of this commentary.

The members started with the expectations of SC, which addressed the celebration of matrimony in two short paragraphs. The council requested that the present rite “be revised and enriched in such a way that the grace of the sacrament is more clearly signified and the duties of the spouses are taught.”⁵ As the Council of Trent had done, the Second Vatican Council allowed regional adaptations to celebrating matrimony while stressing that “the rite must always conform to the law that the priest assisting at the marriage must ask for and obtain the consent of the contracting parties.”⁶

SC moved the celebration of matrimony inside the Mass between the homily and the prayer of the faithful.⁷ Furthermore, “The prayer for the bride, duly amended to remind both spouses of their equal obligation to remain faithful to each other, may be said in the mother tongue.” This caused surprise and debate not

² *Ibid.*, 697.

³ *Ibid.*, 698.

⁴ *Consilium ad exsequendam Constitutionem de Sacra Liturgia, Coetus a Studiis* 22–23, Schemata 157, p. 1. Hereafter, all citations from the postconciliar reports sent to the Consilium are labeled “Schemata.” Copies of the original reports (mostly in Latin, some in modern languages) are held by ICEL and by the University of Notre Dame. All English translations of excerpts from these reports and other footnoted original sources in Latin, Italian, French, Spanish, and German are by the author.

⁵ Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Constitution on Sacred Liturgy) 77, hereafter SC, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html. All translations from the documents of the Second Vatican Council come from the Vatican Website.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 78.

because of promoting the vernacular but for including the groom in the traditional blessing of the bride.

For marriages without Mass, SC called for the reading of the epistle and the gospel;⁸ prior to this time, Catholic weddings included no readings from Scripture. Finally, the council asked that the blessing “always” be given to the spouses.⁹ In the past, the bride alone received her blessing only during Mass. In the discussions preparing these paragraphs of SC, it was Bishop Luigi Carlo Borromeo of Pesaro, Italy, who stated, “I would add, ‘And the blessing of the couple should always be given even if matrimony is celebrated without mass.’”¹⁰

The study group and its advisers worked for two years (1966–1968) on the *Ordo celebrandi matrimonium*, which the Sacred Congregation of Rites approved on the Solemnity of St. Joseph, March 19, 1969. It was among the earliest of the revisions; the decree for the ordination ceremonies preceded it by a few months on August 15, 1968. The congregation’s decree for celebrating matrimony explained that the revision happened in accord with SC so that the rite in force “might be enriched.”¹¹ As Gy wrote in his first communication from the study group,

There certainly are parts of the Roman liturgy in which greater simplicity, brevity—I do not say “impoverishment”—may be desired. On the other hand, many people consider today’s Roman liturgy of matrimony too sober, undernourished. A “richer” result as to meaning and perhaps even as to an expansion of rites will better sanctify human life and turn it toward God.¹²

On the Solemnity of St. Joseph in 1990, the Vatican’s Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (CDWDS) approved the second edition of the same book, with a

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Francisco Gil Hellín, *Concilii Vaticani II synopsis in ordinem redigens schemata cum relationibus necnon Patrum orationes atque animadversiones: Constitutio de Sacra Liturgica Sacrosanctum concilium* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2003), 491.

¹¹ Benno Cardinal Gut, Decree, Prot. N. R 23/969, 19 March 1969.

¹² Schemata 157, p. 6.

further “enrichment”¹³ of its introduction, rites, and prayers and complying with some changes in the Code of Canon Law, which had been revised in 1983. Among those who worked on the revision were Gy and Mazzarello, who had also contributed to the first edition, along with members of the CDWDS.¹⁴

Whereas the English translation of the first edition was published almost immediately, the English translation of the second edition was delayed for many reasons, largely due to a change in the Vatican’s translation policy¹⁵ and the primacy given the work on the third edition of the Roman Missal. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) requested a number of local adaptations, some to put the book in conformity with the Spanish translation approved for use in the United States in 2010.¹⁶ The conferences of Australia and of England and Wales published their revised books ahead of the USCCB, whose adaptations required more consideration.

The new book, then, is new for two reasons: it includes material that the first book did not contain, and the translation of the material that had already appeared in the first book was revised according to new norms.

The historical evidence for the liturgical celebration of matrimony is scattered through many sources, notably the Verona,¹⁷ Gelasian,¹⁸ and Gregorian¹⁹ sacramentaries of the sixth, seventh, and

¹³ Eduardo Cardinal Martínez, Decree, Prot. N. CD 1068/89, 19 March 1990.

¹⁴ Jean Evanou, “Commentarium,” *Notitiae* XXVI (1990): 310–11.

¹⁵ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, “Fifth Instruction ‘For the Right Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council,’” in *Liturgiam authenticam* (On the Use of Vernacular Languages in the Publication of the Books of the Roman Liturgy), http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20010507_liturgiam-authenticam_en.html.

¹⁶ *Ritual del Matrimonio* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010). The paragraph numbers match those in the English edition for the United States, so this commentary makes no further footnote to this source.

¹⁷ *Sacramentarium Veronense*, ed. Leo Cunibert Mohlberg, *Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta* (Rome: Herder Editrice e Libreria, 1978). Hereafter Verona.

¹⁸ *Liber Sacramentorum Romanae aeclesiae ordinis anni circuli*, ed. Leo Cunibert Mohlberg (Rome: Casa Editrice Herder, 1981). Hereafter Gelasian.

¹⁹ *Le Sacramentaire Grégorien, ses principaux forms d’après les plus anciens manuscrits*, ed. Jean Deshusses (Freiburg: Éditions Universitaires, 1979). Hereafter Gregorian.

eighth centuries, respectively, though some elements originated from more obscure origins. After the Council of Trent, the Roman Missal was revised in 1570,²⁰ but the Roman Ritual was not completed until 1614.²¹ The ritual covered a variety of circumstances, from Sunday Mass to baptisms to exorcisms. At times, though, its organization strains logic: weddings are found after funerals. The Missal included a Mass for spouses, one of the options for Mass on a wedding day.

Prior to the post–Vatican II revision, a couple’s wedding took place first, and then, if there was a Mass, it followed, and the nuptial blessing took place only within Mass. The ritual contained the rubrics and words of the wedding, while the Missal contained the rubrics and prayers of the Mass and nuptial blessing. Even today, a priest needs two books: the Missal for the wedding Mass and the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* (OCM) for specific parts of the wedding.

The OCM contains much more than elements of a wedding Mass. For example, it includes directions for a wedding without Mass, as well as prayers for an engagement and wedding anniversary.

This book offers a paragraph by paragraph commentary on the English translation of the second edition of the Vatican’s OCM. The reader will derive most benefit with a copy of the ritual book at hand. Although this book traverses the academic fields of liturgy, history, translation, and custom, it hopes to help the church celebrate well, in meaning and in symbol, the immeasurable mystery of inseparable love.

²⁰ *Missale Romanum ex decreto SS. Concilii Tridentini restitutum summorum pontificum cura recognitum* (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1962). Hereafter *Missale Romanum*. All translations of excerpts of this work into English are by the author. The last section of the 1962 edition puts the page numbers within brackets. Subsequent footnotes referencing this section reflect this usage.

²¹ *The Roman Ritual in Latin and English with Rubrics and Plainchant Notation: The Sacraments and Processions*, trans. and ed. Philip T. Weller, vol. 1 (Boonville, NY: Preserving Christian Publications, 2007). Hereafter *Roman Ritual*. All translations of excerpts of this work from Latin into English are by the author.

The Title

The revised English translation carries a new title. The first edition was called *Rite of Marriage*,¹ and the second is *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony*. There has been no change to the Latin title of the post-Vatican II book; both editions are *Ordo celebrandi matrimonium*.²

Prayers and rubrics for the ceremony have appeared in liturgical books under many different titles. The sixth-century Verona Sacramentary called it *Incipit uelatio nuptialis*,³ or “The Veiling of the Bride Begins [Here].” The custom of veiling the bride was known as early as Popes Siricius (+399) and Innocent I (+417), whereas Paulinus of Nola (+431) told of veiling both the bride and the groom.⁴ Isidore of Seville (+636) says that the very word that has come into English as “nuptial” refers to the veil: “The verb *obnubere* means ‘to cover.’ Hence, . . . [these] women are called *nuptae*, because they veil their faces, just as clouds [*nubae*] cover the sky.”⁵

By the seventh century, the Gelasian Sacramentary included a collection of prayers titled *Incipit accio nupcialis*, or “The Nuptial Act Begins [Here].”⁶ The eighth-century Gregorian Sacramentary’s

¹ *The Rites of the Catholic Church* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 715. Hereafter *The Rites*.

² *Editio typica* (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1972); and *Editio typica altera* (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1991).

³ Verona 1105 supra.

⁴ Kenneth W. Stevenson, *To Join Together: The Rite of Marriage* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1987), 22–23.

⁵ Mark Searle and Kenneth W. Stevenson, *Documents of the Marriage Liturgy* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 118.

⁶ Gelasian 1443 supra.

Hadrian Supplement used the heading *Orat[io]n[es] ad sponsas ve-landas*,⁷ or “Prayers for Veiling Women Who Have Been Promised.” The English word “spouse” comes from the Latin word for making a promise.⁸ The Roman Ritual of 1614, a product of the Counter-Reformation, changed the title to defend the doctrine that there are seven sacraments, not two, as the Protestant Reformers held. It called the ceremony *Ritus celebrandi matrimonii sacramentum*,⁹ or “The Rite of Celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony.” Some editions called it *Ritus administrandi matrimonii sacramentum*, or “The Rite of Administering the Sacrament of Matrimony,” stressing the juridical nature of the ceremony and the active role of the priest.¹⁰

After the Second Vatican Council, the Consilium’s study group approved its first draft of the revised ceremony on August 25, 1966, under the title *Ritus celebrandi matrimonii sacramentum intra missam*, or “The Rite of Celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony within Mass.”¹¹ The second draft of February 8, 1967, changed the title to *De sacramento matrimonii*,¹² or “On the Sacrament of Matrimony.” The third draft of March 24, 1967, simplified the title to *De matrimonio*, or “On Matrimony.”¹³ The final draft of March 21, 1968, changed it back to *De sacramento matrimonii*,¹⁴ explaining that “the title *de Matrimonio* [sic] follows the traditional arrangement of the Roman Ritual, which has been done for the rite of funerals”¹⁵ by the same study group.

⁷ Gregorian 833 supra.

⁸ Adrien Nocent, “The Christian Rite of Marriage in the West,” in *Handbook for Liturgical Studies IV: Sacraments and Sacramentals*, ed. Anscar J. Chupungco (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 277.

⁹ *Roman Ritual*, 460.

¹⁰ Michael Driscoll, “Marriage and Mozart: Ritual Change in Eighteenth-Century Vienna,” in *Ars Liturgiae: Worship, Aesthetics and Praxis: Essays in Honor of Nathan D. Mitchell*, ed. Clare V. Johnson (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2003), 89.

¹¹ *Consilium ad exsequendam Constitutionem de Sacra Liturgia, Coetus a Studiis* 22–23, Schemata 183, p. 1. Hereafter, Schemata.

¹² Schemata 204, p. 1.

¹³ Schemata 221, p. 1.

¹⁴ Schemata 280, p. 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. i.

In the end, the Vatican's Congregation must have decided that including the word "sacrament," appropriate for a catechetical book, was unnecessary for the title of the liturgical book.

The Congregation made an early distinction between "rites" and "orders." An order was an entire book containing a series of rites. Thus the subheading "The Rite of Matrimony" refers to the marriage ceremony that takes place within the entire *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*. The second edition makes this change in English. The book used to be called *Rite of Marriage*, but now it is called an "order," in keeping with other liturgical books.

Considerable discussion concerned the best English translation for the word *matrimonium*. The International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) has been charged with working out the translations for submission to the conferences of bishops and the subsequent approval of the Vatican.¹⁶ ICEL preferred to keep the word "marriage" in the title. It distinguished "matrimony" as a sacrament from "marriage" as a ritual. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, for example, consistently uses the Latin word *matrimonium* for its treatment of the sacrament,¹⁷ but the English translation has "matrimony" for the title of that section¹⁸ and in every reference to the sacrament,¹⁹ but it favors "marriage" as a translation throughout the rest of the section, especially in paragraphs pertaining to married life and to the wedding.²⁰ Similarly, the Code of Canon Law consistently uses the word *matrimonium*, which is rendered "marriage" in English.²¹

¹⁶ See <http://www.icelweb.org/whatis.htm>. The author of this book serves as a facilitator for the biannual meetings of the commission, and information about ICEL's commission meetings comes from his personal experience; hence, such remarks carry no footnotes.

¹⁷ *Catechismus Catholicæ ecclesiæ* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), 1601–1666.

¹⁸ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1997), 1601 supra. Hereafter CCC.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1620, 1623, 1638 supra, 1641 supra, 1641, 1642, 1644, 1647, and 1661.

²⁰ 1621, for example.

²¹ *The Code of Canon Law Latin-English Edition*, trans. Canon Law Society of America (Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1983), canons 1055–1165. Hereafter Canon.

The USCCB, however, which received the translation from ICEL as *The Order of Celebrating Marriage*,²² wanted a change. As reported in the newsletter of the USCCB's Committee on Divine Worship, "It was recommended that the title use 'Matrimony' to highlight the book as a liturgical ritual (*i.e.*, the Sacrament of Matrimony) for the beginning of a lifelong commitment of one man and one woman."²³ Indeed, according to other news coverage, the American bishops sought a way to show that the trend toward the legalization of unions between two men or two women, commonly called "gay marriage," was different from the Catholic definition of marriage.

Springfield, Illinois, bishop Thomas Paprocki rose to make an amendment that the bishops revise the texts to replace each use of the word "marriage" with the word "matrimony," saying that was a closer translation of the Latin original.

Referencing the approval of marriage equality in fifteen states, Paprocki also said what the bishops mean when they say the word "marriage" is "different than what our society is saying now."

"The word marriage has now been co-opted," he said. "I think we have to recognize that reality . . . and then make some distinctions about what we mean by matrimony."

New Orleans archbishop Gregory Aymond, who leads the bishops' committee responsible for spearheading the translations, said his divine worship committee did not support making that change.

"We believed it was better to use [the words] interchangeably, otherwise it could be construed that we are admitting defeat" on the redefinition of the term marriage, Aymond said.

Paprocki's initial amendment was voted down by the bishops in a firm voice vote. Paprocki then proposed they change the word "marriage" to "matrimony" in the title of the rite, which the bishops approved by 114-95.²⁴

²² *Newsletter: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Divine Worship* XLIX (November–December 2013): 48.

²³ *Ibid.*, 47.

²⁴ Joshua McElwee, "Bishops Overwhelmingly Approve Continuing Liturgy Translations," *National Catholic Reporter*, November 12, 2013, <http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/bishops-overwhelmingly-approve-continuing-mass-translations>.

Father Andrew Menke, associate director of the USCCB's Secretariat for Divine Worship, observed, "The bishops felt that the word 'matrimony' has a more sacred connotation than 'marriage.' They thought the change was important in the American context, where we've seen attempts to redefine what marriage even means."²⁵

Apparently the CDWDS agreed, and in all the official versions sent to all English-speaking conferences of bishops, the word in the title changed from "Marriage" to "Matrimony."

This creates a discrepancy with the revised English translation of the Missal's third edition, where one finds the prayers and antiphons for the Mass "For the Celebration of Marriage." The prayers are located in the collection of ritual Masses, a section that did not exist in the pre-Vatican II Missal because so few sacraments of the Catholic Church were celebrated during Mass. Instead, that missal put its Mass *Pro sponsis* among the Votive Masses.²⁶ At first, the post-Vatican II Lectionary and the first editions of the missal retained the title *Pro sponsis* in their new section of ritual Masses. The first English translation of the Missal, which favored a recognizable vocabulary, called it the "Wedding Mass."²⁷ The third edition of the Missal changed the title to *In celebratione matrimonii*,²⁸ which now appears in English as "For the Celebration of Marriage."²⁹ The English word "matrimony" has never appeared in the title until the second edition of the post-Vatican II ritual.

Throughout its history, then, the title of this celebration has stressed different points: the mystical veiling of the bride, her

²⁵ Barry Hudock, "Changes Coming to Marriage Rite in the U.S.," *Our Sunday Visitor*, December 16, 2015, <https://www.osv.com/OSVNewsweekly/Perspectives/Columnists/Article/TabId/797/ArtMID/13632/ArticleID/18852/Changes-coming-to-marriage-rite-in-the-US.aspx>.

²⁶ *Missale Romanum*, p. [75].

²⁷ *The Sacramentary* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1974), 840.

²⁸ *Missale Romanum ex decreto sacrosanti ecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instaurato auctoritate Pauli PP. VI promulgata Ioannis Pauli PP. II cura recognitum*, Editio Typica Tertia (Vatican City: Typic Vaticanis, 2008), 1023.

²⁹ *The Roman Missal Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011), 1177. Hereafter Roman Missal.

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promised status, the doctrine of sacramentality, the role of the priest, the sacredness of the quotidian, and opposition to same-sex marriage.

Introduction

The second edition's expanded introduction is one of its most important features, especially the first eleven paragraphs, which can serve as a foundation for premarital catechesis on the Catholic Church's theology of matrimony.

The 1952 edition of the Roman Ritual devoted a comparable introduction to juridical concerns about marriage—the publication of the banns and the search for impediments, for example.¹ The post-Vatican II study group took a new approach.

After a certain general expression of the mystery of Christian matrimony, as was often done in different sections of the post-Tridentine Roman Ritual, it must certainly treat special problems of the pastoral liturgy of matrimony, as well as adaptations that may be useful or necessary.

For if certain episcopal conferences desire to use a future Roman Ritual in their own territory, that Ritual will have to preserve and keep intact local customs, and resolve difficulties pertinent to certain cultures, and offer sufficient space all over for adaptation.²

As Annibale Bugnini explained, this introduction was the Council's first, so it lacked some of the style, content, and scope evident in later contributions.³ The previously published *Ordo* for ordinations did not include an introduction, so the one for

¹ *The Roman Ritual in Latin and English with Rubrics and Plainchant Notation: The Sacraments and Processions*, trans. and ed. Philip T. Weller, vol. 1 (Boonville, NY: Preserving Christian Publications, 2007), 454–60. Hereafter, *Roman Ritual*.

² Schemata 182a, pp. 3–4.

³ Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948–1975*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 699.

matrimony was the first among the revised liturgical books. These introductory paragraphs went through several drafts before the publication of the first edition, and the second edition has completely expanded the contents, even rearranging some paragraphs. It has four sections that now match the introductions of other ritual books: The Importance and Dignity of the Sacrament of Matrimony (1–11), Duties and Ministries (12–27), The Celebration of Marriage (28–38), and Adaptations to Be Prepared by the Conferences of Bishops (39–44). This diligent work has made a more satisfying introduction to the book.

In the commentary that follows, the heading numbers match those in the OCM. Although they usually include more than one paragraph, the numbers are considered “paragraphs” for the sake of this commentary. The first paragraph of the commentary usually summarizes the relevant content of the ritual book.

I. THE IMPORTANCE AND DIGNITY OF THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

The first eleven paragraphs treat the importance and dignity of marriage. In addition to their reliance on the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*),⁴ they derive insight from the apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* of Pope John Paul II.⁵

1.

Matrimony has its origins in creation itself, yet it has a higher degree among Christians who number it among the sacraments. This is a new opening paragraph to the entire book. The original opening has been moved to paragraph 6.

⁴ Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Council on the Church in the Modern World), hereafter GS, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

⁵ John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* (On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World), hereafter FC, November 22, 1981, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html.

The new paragraph 1 describes marriage as a covenant and a partnership between a man and a woman, and places it within the spheres of natural and canon law. Its first footnote stands upon canon law's definition of marriage.⁶ The revised Code of Canon Law came into force over a decade after the first edition of the OCM. The second edition thus links these books at the very first opportunity.

One of the earliest testimonies to marriage among Christians is from the second-century "Letter to Diognetus," which simply states that Christians marry like everyone else.⁷ This opening paragraph makes a similar point: the Christian practice is based on natural law.

2.

Marriage is established by the free, irrevocable consent of both spouses. It requires complete fidelity and indissoluble unity. This paragraph 2 consists of only the first two sentences of the original paragraph 2, whose final sentence has been moved to the second half of the new paragraph 5.

As noted in the original edition, the ideas come from GS, one of the last documents of the Second Vatican Council. Its number 48 breaks into four paragraphs. The first of these opens with the idea of the conjugal covenant of irrevocable consent and closes with the expectation of total fidelity and unbreakable oneness in marriage.⁸

According to Gy, the original first four paragraphs of the OCM were written by Lécuyer,⁹ a member of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, a theology teacher at the Lateran University in Rome,¹⁰ and an original member of group 22.¹¹ Lécuyer had placed a heading on each of these paragraphs. This one he called "The Nature of

⁶ Canon 1055, §1.

⁷ "Office of Readings, Wednesday, Fifth Week of Easter," in *Liturgy of the Hours*, vol. 3 (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co. 1976), 840–41.

⁸ GS 48.

⁹ Schemata 204, p. [i].

¹⁰ Bugnini, *Reform of the Liturgy*, 947.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 579.

Matrimony.”¹² The headings were removed from the final draft¹³ and never appeared in the published book.

ICEL had discussions about the word “spouses,” which appears many times in the translation, sometimes referring to the bride and groom before they are married as wife and husband. The Latin uses words for the couple in both senses—the bride and groom about to be married and the couple that have now been married. Here and in other places of the OCM, the English word “spouses” has remained.

3.

Both marriage and conjugal love are ordered toward the procreation and education of children. Children even contribute to the good of the parents. This new paragraph 3 is the first half of the original paragraph 4. Hence, it was also authored by Lécuyer, who gave it the heading “On Matrimonial Fecundity.”¹⁴

The footnote from the end of this paragraph in the first edition has been moved here in the second edition, showing that these ideas also derive from GS. The final section of GS 48 states that children contribute to making their parents holy.¹⁵ The second edition, however, does not properly credit an additional source, GS 50. Ciappi, the theologian of the papal household and adviser on the final draft of the OCM, shared a few pertinent thoughts with the cardinal secretary of state Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, who agreed with him, prompting Ciappi to write to the Consilium.¹⁶ Ciappi was suggesting a reference to GS 50: “Children are really the supreme gift of marriage and contribute very substantially to the welfare of their parents.”¹⁷ This idea was added to Lécuyer’s draft and included in the original paragraph 4 in the same place where it now concludes paragraph 3. The paragraph in the first edition used one final footnote to cite both numbers from GS. In

¹² Schemata 204, p. [1].

¹³ Schemata 280, p. 2.

¹⁴ Schemata 204, p. [1].

¹⁵ GS 48.

¹⁶ Schemata 280 addendum, p. 2.

¹⁷ GS 50.

shortening that paragraph to create this one for the second edition, the connection between these lines and GS 50 was lost.

4.

God the creator established marriage with laws and a blessing. Its existence is not the product of human decision but of its divine origins.

This new paragraph has no equivalent in the first edition. Having established the natural origins of marriage, its nature and expectations, the introduction now stresses its divine establishment. Footnotes show the influence of Jesus' teaching in the Gospel of Matthew, the words of the nuptial blessing, and GS once again. Perhaps the editors of the second edition felt that changes in society's practice of marriage erroneously presumed that people and governments were free to redefine a divine institution.

5.

Christ willed that marriage be restored to its primordial form and raised it to the dignity of a sacrament. This paragraph has been built from the final sentence of the original paragraph 2 along with new material based on two biblical passages.¹⁸ The introduction makes here its first direct reference to Christ. Building on arguments from natural law and from fundamental theism, the exposition now becomes explicitly Christian.

The second half comes from the paragraph in the first edition that Lécuyer had called "The Nature of Matrimony." Breaking open his paragraph in this way permits a more expansive treatment of its themes.

6.

At Cana, Christ foreshadowed the hour of his new and eternal covenant, in which he offers himself to the church as Spouse.

This paragraph is new to the second edition. It develops the theme of the Christian view of human marriage, a sacrament of the union of Christ and the church. The paragraph dips once again

¹⁸ 2 Cor 5:17 and Matt 19:6.

into GS 48. This is the only paragraph in the OCM that refers to the paschal mystery, a concept much prized by the documents of Vatican II.

7.

The marriage between two baptized persons is always a sacrament. This new paragraph is inspired by GS,¹⁹ but it especially comes from ideas in the 1981 apostolic exhortation of John Paul II, FC.²⁰ There he states that Christ sacrificed himself on the cross for the sake of his bride the church. Marriage is specifically a sacrament of the covenant in the blood of Christ. Interestingly, this paragraph does not state that the marriage of someone who is unbaptized is not a sacrament. As will be noted below in the commentary on Chapter III, those who prepared the revised marriage ceremony after the council did not take a position on that point.

8.

Christian spouses participate in the unity and fruitful love of Christ and the church. They help each other become holy.

This is the former paragraph 1, the very beginning of the first edition of the same book—word for word, with identical footnotes. It has been moved here where the previous paragraphs better prepare for it. Lécuyer drafted this and gave it the heading “On Matrimony and the People of God.”²¹

9.

Through the Holy Spirit Christian spouses nurture and foster their union in dignity and charity. This is the former paragraph 3, relocated and expanded.

In this location, the argument of the introduction flows more logically, as it tells more of the responsibilities of spouses. The paragraph has been expanded both at the beginning and at the end. The reference to the Holy Spirit is new, along with the intimation of Ephesians 5:25, that Christ loved the church and gave

¹⁹ GS 48.

²⁰ FC 13.

²¹ Schemata 204, p. [1].

himself up for her. This balances with the new conclusion to the paragraph that focuses on unity and commitment, avoiding adultery and divorce. The allusion to GS 49, which mentions these two ways that marriage can be “profaned,” is also new.

Lécuyer drafted the original paragraph, which he called “On Conjugal Love.”²² His draft was abbreviated before the publication of the first edition and then was expanded with the second. Ironically, Lécuyer had included GS’s allusion to adultery and divorce at the end of his paragraph, where it had been removed, and where now it has been reinserted.

10.

Couples glorify the Creator as they carry out procreation with generous, human Christian responsibility. This is the second half of the former paragraph 4 drafted by Lécuyer and given the heading “On Matrimonial Fecundity.”²³ The first half now stands as paragraph 3.

The second half of this paragraph is new. It alludes to Paul’s exhortation that couples should develop a spirit of sacrifice or self-control.²⁴ It also makes a final reference to GS.²⁵

11.

God called the couple and continues to call them to a marriage that is united and bears witness to the world. This is a new paragraph, and it concludes the first section of the revised introduction.

Two references build the content. It opens with another nod to John Paul’s FC.²⁶ It concludes with a generous quotation from Tertullian (+225). Whereas John Paul’s ministry postdates the first edition of the OCM, Tertullian’s work was well known at the time. This citation supports arguments for the existence of an early Christian marriage ceremony. After all, Tertullian mentions the joining in the context of an offering and a blessing. The English

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ 1 Cor 7:5.

²⁵ GS 50.

²⁶ FC 51.

translation expands the Latin word *oblatio* into the term “sacrificial offering,” which invites a eucharistic interpretation. It would be dangerous, however, to extrapolate too much from this because evidence for early Christian wedding ceremonies is scarce. The same quotation appears in the CCC, without the word “sacrificial” and with other minor differences.²⁷ Tertullian’s lovely words to his wife deserve their honored place here.

II. DUTIES AND MINISTRIES

This entire section of the introduction is new to the second edition of the OCM. Nearly all its footnotes come from two works that appeared after publication of the first edition: FC and the Code of Canon Law. The introduction has been restructured to imitate the outline of those in other ritual books, which all include a section on duties and ministries.

12.

Many people share responsibilities for the preparation and celebration of marriage—the couple, the clergy, and the entire community. This new paragraph footnotes John Paul II again,²⁸ where he explores the importance of lifelong and proximate preparation for marriage. But it could also have cited *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church from the Second Vatican Council. Its development of the people of God explains the sacramental responsibilities of the collective whole of those who have been baptized.²⁹

13.

The bishop regulates the celebration and pastoral care of marriage throughout the diocese. This paragraph refers back to the same place in FC where John Paul II challenges the church to

²⁷ CCC 1642.

²⁸ FC 66.

²⁹ *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) 11, hereafter LG, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

offer fitting marriage preparation.³⁰ Its more specific source is the section from the Code of Canon Law that treats the pastoral care and preparation for marriage.³¹ Although the OCM does not say so explicitly, canon law suggests that the bishop consult men and women of proven experience and skill.³²

This is the first usage of the term “engaged couples,” the translation of which ICEL had discussed along with the word “spouses” in paragraph 2. Noting that the *Book of Blessings* includes a blessing for an “engaged couple,”³³ the term was retained.

14.

Pastors provide assistance by preaching and catechesis, marriage preparation, the liturgical celebration of marriage, and continued support of married couples. This paragraph is nearly a complete re-presentation of one in the Code of Canon Law.³⁴ This section of the introduction is moving through the hierarchy of the church from bishops through pastors.

15.

Couples should allow sufficient time for preparation. This paragraph contains no footnotes and received no comments from anyone reviewing the translation. It offers practical advice growing from the previous paragraphs about preparation. No period of time is specified because the needs change from one country to another, one diocese to another, one parish to another, and even one couple to another.

The author of this paragraph surely realized that few couples would actually read the introduction to the OCM. Hence, it takes the slant that the engaged should be made aware of a timetable in advance. In practice, parishes often make their expectations known on the cover of the weekly bulletin or on their website.

³⁰ FC 66.

³¹ Canons 1063–1072, especially 1063–1064.

³² *Ibid.*, 1064.

³³ *Book of Blessings* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1989), 195–214. Hereafter BB.

³⁴ Canon 1063.

16.

Pastors should welcome engaged couples and nourish their faith. Although this entire section on duties and ministries is new to the second edition, this brief paragraph appeared in the first edition as paragraph 7. It, however, was even shorter there. The second edition adds a motive for pastors: They are to be led by the love of Christ. Whereas the preceding paragraph garnered no comments, this one has a long history of controversy.

This paragraph argues that the sacrament of matrimony demands faith, but it footnotes a paragraph in SC, which says that all sacraments presuppose faith.³⁵ It is true that matrimony does but no more than the rest.

Due to the rearrangement of paragraphs in the introduction, this has become the OCM's first footnote to SC, and to a very significant spot: not the section that laid out the council's plans to revise the marriage ceremony, but its overview of the spiritual nature of sacraments.

Hidden within the opening words is the fear that pastors will not conduct preparation with love, yet this is what they are called to do. Many pastors feel inconvenienced by marriage preparation and weddings. Hurt by years of experience, some feel that couples take advantage of them and the church. Yet here and—as will be seen at OCM 45—in the introductory rites, the liturgy reminds pastors of their human and ministerial responsibility to show love, kindness, and mercy to those who are entering a life based on the same virtues. Blessed are those couples planning to profess their love publicly who meet happiness and support from the pastor and parish staff.

Today's pastors are not alone. Their predecessors, those who prepared the postconciliar marriage ceremony, expressed concern that some couples lacked faith.

The first draft of this paragraph in 1967 added the opinion that if faith was lacking, it was not permitted to celebrate marriage.³⁶ A redraft the same year went further: If there is no faith, "even if there is no doubt concerning validity, it is not permitted to cele-

³⁵ SC 59.

³⁶ Schemata 204, p. 2. It first appeared as paragraph 6.

brate the sacrament of matrimony."³⁷ The preparatory group added a footnote:

See in another historical context these words of Pope Benedict XIV *De Synodo Dioecesis*. VIII, 14, 15: "Since Matrimony between faithful Christians is one of the seven sacraments of the new law instituted by Christ the Lord, and one of their number that is called sacraments of the living, no one may celebrate it in a state of mortal sin without grave sacrilege."³⁸

In prefatory comments to this draft, the study group explained matters this way:

For the most part this introduction is taken whether by word or intention from the conciliar Constitutions on the Sacred Liturgy (n. 11), on the Church (n. 1), and on the Church in the Modern World (nn. 2, 3, 4). Nevertheless, n. 7 deserved special consideration because the gravest difficulties may be found in some nations concerning the defect of faith of many who are engaged.

The doctrine of this paragraph number, namely concerning the conditions required for receiving any sacrament of the living, seems to be common and is exposed with great clarity by Pope Benedict XIV. Attending to the pastoral difficulty, the text was edited most carefully, by the work of the most excellent Bishop Carlo Colombo, with the approval of the most excellent Bishop Pericle Felici.³⁹

Colombo was the bishop recommended for theological questions on the advice of the Secretariat of State. Felici was a member of the Consilium who eventually became a cardinal.

When the final draft was prepared in 1968, the prefatory notes restated the problem.

There are given then some indications of the principal pastoral difficulties that arise in relation to Matrimony, especially when the spouses have been baptized but do not believe, a case particularly

³⁷ Schemata 221, p. 6. It became paragraph 7 here.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., 3.

pressing in certain countries (cf. art. 7 and the particular Note on this article), or when Matrimony is celebrated between one party who is Catholic and another who is not (art. 8: text proposed by the Secretariat for Christian Unity).⁴⁰

Even this explanation seemed insufficient, so Colombo added in Italian an extraordinary three-page “Special Note on Article VII,” concerning the pastoral problem of faith.

1. The Roman Ritual, published in 1614 by Pope Paul V, in force up to our own age, carries an important doctrinal, canonical and pastoral “Introduction,” which has been in particular one of the fonts of the Code of Canon Law of 1917 for the sacraments. The Constitution *Sacrosanctum concilium* underlines at article 63 the importance of an “Introduction” of this type, and in particular its “social moment,” and it establishes what should apply also to the rituals prepared by the episcopal conferences, with appropriate adaptations.

2. As the constitution *Sacrosanctum concilium* recalls in the preamble of the chapter “On the Sacraments,” the fact of being sacraments “of faith” pertains to the nature of the sacraments: “They do not only presuppose faith, but they also nourish, strengthen and express it with words and actions; therefore, they are called sacraments of faith” (art. 59). If the sacraments presuppose faith, each one in the manner particular to it, it is necessary that priests in the preparation of those betrothed to matrimony nourish their faith, and, if necessary, commit themselves to the effort of reawakening it or giving it rebirth.

3. But one needs to take account at this point of a difficulty, perhaps rather rare in the regions that have remained more Christian, but on the other hand frequently in dechristianized countries: the existence of persons, baptized in the Catholic Church, who not only have abandoned every religious practice, but have been notoriously “nonbelievers,” or who, before matrimony, formally declare to the priest that they renounce the faith, still demanding that their matrimony be celebrated in the church. This can happen with one of the engaged or with both.

⁴⁰ Schemata 280, p. i.

4. This problem is grave, and it has been considered such by faithful and clergy. The faithful are scandalized in seeing that the liturgical texts, which, above all when they are said in the vernacular language, express and presuppose faith, have been used also for the matrimony of those who have renounced it. Non-Catholics wonder if the Church attributes true importance to its own liturgy and even its own faith. Priests have been profoundly disturbed by the fact of having to exercise their ministry under these conditions. It seems indispensable then to remedy this difficulty at the time of the revision of the marriage Ritual.

5. When only one of the two parties, both having been baptized in the Catholic Church, renounces the faith, while the other is a believer, it seems advisable, in the interest of the believing party, that the sacramental rite be celebrated in church according to the liturgical rules. The following observations pertain therefore only to the case in which both parties renounce the faith.

6. If the priest has not been able in any way to awaken or sustain the faith of the betrothed, it is desirable that they not be obliged "to follow the Catholic form of matrimony" (see Code of Canon Law 1099), because that would be contrary to their conscience (see the Declaration on Religious Liberty, 2), which renounces the faith expressed in the liturgy of the sacrament.

It would even seem appropriate in this case to refuse the betrothed the "Catholic form of matrimony," so as not to cause scandal to the faithful and an obstacle to the evangelization of non-Christians.

7. In this case two baptized Catholics, who have both renounced the faith, if they marry, would find themselves in the same situation of two baptized non-Catholics who renounce the sacramental value of matrimony: Matrimony thus realized, *when it possesses all the conditions necessary to be a true matrimony, is a sacrament*, even if the spouses do not know its exact religious meaning.

However, there is a close difference between the situation of two baptized Protestants who deny the sacramental value of matrimony and two baptized, non-believing Catholics: In reality, for the first, marriage is a religious act, while for the second this religious meaning is totally absent.

8. Article 7 of the "Introduction" is the following: "First of all, pastors should foster and nourish the faith of the engaged, for the sacrament of matrimony presupposes faith (see the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 59).

“However, if it is established that both spouses renounce their faith, even if the serious intention of contracting matrimony is established, it is not permitted to celebrate the rite of the sacrament of matrimony.”

The second paragraph pertains to the problem above. Because it touches not only the pastoral aspect of matrimony in its celebration, but the doctrine and the discipline of the Church, this problem should eventually be treated by the competent dicasteries, *examining the possibility of matrimony for unbelieving Catholics without the obligation of the canonical-liturgical form*.⁴¹

Predictably, the complete text of the draft of the rite that accompanied this note contains the same wording for paragraph 7.⁴²

Ciappi, who had already opposed earlier drafts of paragraph 7, objected: “The Church always has an obligation to remind ‘unbelieving Catholics’ of their duties as *de iure* ‘subjects,’ even if they behave as though they were not such.”⁴³ He wrote this formal response:

Given that the most eminent Cardinal Secretary of State has proposed a correction, I would think it appropriate to agree with him. Also in the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith it is preferred to examine individual cases, rather than give a general dispensation, which one could easily abuse. On the part of the Church, in fact, there always remains the obligation to invite “unbelieving Catholics” back to their duty as “subjects” *de iure*, even if they are such *de facto*, but behave as if they are not.⁴⁴

When the much-debated paragraph 7 appeared in the first edition of the OCM, the Vatican’s lighter touch prevailed: “First of all, pastors should foster and nourish the faith of the engaged, for the sacrament of matrimony presupposes and demands faith.” The sentence carried then—as it does in the second edition—a footnote to SC 59. It removed the controversial statements about refusing

⁴¹ Schemata 280, pp. iii–v. Colombo’s authorship is established in Schemata 180 addendum, p. 1, and in Bugnini, *Reform of the Liturgy*, 701.

⁴² Schemata 280, p. 3.

⁴³ Letter of May 3, 1968, cited by Bugnini, *Reform of the Liturgy*, 701.

⁴⁴ Schemata 280 addendum, p. 2.

to celebrate the rite of the sacrament and that unbelieving Catholics might contract a valid marriage outside the canonical-liturgical form. The only hint of the debate was in the insertion of the word “demands.”

Omitting the controversy did not end it. Several years later, John Paul II returned to the theme of the engaged unbelieving Catholic,⁴⁵ which gave the editors of the second edition of the OCM a source for addressing the pastoral dilemma. It appears in paragraph 21.

When the second edition repositioned paragraph 7 as paragraph 16, it also clarified its structure and identified the love of Christ as a motivation. The result is the fruit of much care. It reminds those involved with ministry for the engaged that they are helping people with spiritual preparation, not merely wedding preparation.

17.

The engaged couple should be given catechesis about marriage and the family, as well as the rites, prayers, and readings of the wedding ceremony. This paragraph has reworked and relocated the former paragraph 5.

In its original placement, it came after the four paragraphs drafted by Lécuyer. The second edition has amplified those into a broader presentation of the church’s teaching on marriage through eleven paragraphs. This paragraph suggests that those eleven may serve as the foundation for catechesis.

The first draft from 1967 had only one sentence here.⁴⁶ It primarily pertained to the homily, suggesting that it make a connection to the Scriptures, in accord with SC⁴⁷ and *Inter œcumenici*,⁴⁸ a 1965 instruction by the Sacred Congregation of Rites on implementing SC, which came at an early stage of the renewal; many of its sections were superseded by later documents. There was nothing wrong with the original paragraph 5 of the first edition of the OCM, but

⁴⁵ FC 68.

⁴⁶ Schemata 204, p. 2.

⁴⁷ SC 52.

⁴⁸ *Inter œcumenici* 54, hereafter IO, <https://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/CDWINOEC.HTM>.

its treatment of the homily was already contained in what became the second edition's paragraph 57, so the focus of paragraph 17 has shifted from the homily to catechesis.

The second half of the original paragraph 5 came from the last draft of the study group.⁴⁹ Most of this was retained in the second edition, though moved to this paragraph. It fits better within a presentation of duties and ministries.

18.

Before marriage, Catholics should receive the sacrament of Confirmation unless they face some grave inconvenience. The engaged are also encouraged to receive the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist.

This paragraph, entirely new, fits the spirit of paragraph 16, which sees marriage as a time to nourish faith through the sacraments. It also turns to the Code of Canon Law, still unrevised at the time of the first edition of the OCM, to explain the requirements concerning confirmation.⁵⁰

Surprising to some will be the statement that confirmation completes initiation because, in practice, many receive confirmation after baptism and before first communion. The 1971 decree of the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship announcing the new post-Vatican II Order of Confirmation says that initiation is brought to completion with the help of confirmation.⁵¹ The CCC notes in several places that confirmation completes baptismal grace, or that it completes *baptism*, but not "initiation."⁵² Even so, the usage of this term probably means that confirmation brings baptism to greater perfection; it cannot imply that anything is somehow lacking in baptism.

In practice, many Catholics go unconfirmed, and many of them get engaged. Confirmation is not absolutely required for a Catholic wedding, though some people think it is. The definition of a

⁴⁹ Schemata 280, p. 3.

⁵⁰ Canon 1065.

⁵¹ Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, "Decree" Prot. n. 800/71s., in *Order of Confirmation* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2016), v.

⁵² CCC 1285, 1288, 1290, 1291, 1304.

“grave inconvenience” is a matter of judgment. It probably means some chronic reason why the Catholic was unable to be confirmed, not a persistent carelessness on the part of the potential candidate for confirmation. Still, the past is past. If being confirmed before the wedding would cause a grave inconvenience, then the Catholic(s) may have to wait to be confirmed. Nonetheless, they should strive to receive confirmation at the earliest opportunity.

Another “grave inconvenience” could be that the unconfirmed person is already married outside the church. Which sacrament should come first? Canon Law forbids anyone in “manifest grave sin” to receive communion.⁵³ By extension, a person married outside the church is ineligible for confirmation. Hence, the marriage should be convalidated first, and then the person, being in a valid marriage, becomes eligible for confirmation.

Advice to celebrate the sacrament of penance is modified by the expression “if necessary.” Only those in mortal sin are obliged to confess in the sacrament of penance.⁵⁴ Nonetheless, confession is advisable for venial sins.⁵⁵

19.

For a valid and licit celebration of marriage, no canonical obstacle can stand in the way. Those responsible conduct a reasonable investigation of the couple’s background.

The paragraph turns again to the revised Code of Canon Law,⁵⁶ published after the OCM’s first edition. Hence, this paragraph is new, though it restates word for word the content of the pertinent canon.

20.

Pastors should evangelize the couple’s love in the light of faith, showing how even the canonical requirements promote faith and love, as well as the Christian family.

⁵³ Canon 915.

⁵⁴ Canon 988 §1.

⁵⁵ Canon 988 §2.

⁵⁶ Canon 1066.

This paragraph is entirely new and does not quote any other document. It builds on the theme of fostering faith in marriage preparation. Perhaps, in a section that is steeped in canons, this paragraph reminds pastors of the spiritual good toward which the canons aspire.

ICEL considered several options for the translation of the phrase “prevailing attitudes.” At first, using a cognate from the Latin, it had proposed “popular attitudes.” Some objected to the word “popular” because it seemed to have a positive connotation, whereas the sentence warns about such mentalities. The commission agreed and proposed several alternatives, including “widespread,” “common,” “different,” “differing,” and “various.” In the end, “prevailing” seemed best to catch the meaning.

21.

If the couple reject what the church intends, the pastor is not permitted to celebrate the sacrament. This paragraph squarely returns to the themes put forth in the draft of the first edition’s paragraph 7.

In the second edition, the topic became easier to address because John Paul II had elaborated the difficulties in FC.⁵⁷ There, he reviewed many of the themes that lay behind the first paragraph 7, making it seem that he had reviewed the material previously discussed. The pope’s conclusion is what the new paragraph 21 cites: A pastor refuses to celebrate the sacrament of marriage only when the couple have prevented it. The spirit of John Paul’s exhortation, however, is to avoid the predicament and to disdain laying down further criteria. He knew the pastoral, canonical, ecumenical, and spiritual problems.

Anecdotally, many pastors will say that the number of marriages has decreased in the early part of the twenty-first century. Indeed, perhaps some couples have realized that they do not want what the church offers, and they are seeking a wedding elsewhere.

ICEL wondered if saying pastors “must” take note of the situation was too strong. Other proposals were made, including “should” and “ought,” but in the end the strong word remained.

⁵⁷ FC 68.

22.

Other special cases exist. A Catholic may marry another Christian, a catechumen, an unbaptized person, or a person who has rejected faith. Such cases deserve pastoral care and have recourse to competent authority.

This paragraph gives more detail on the pastoral situations that arise especially with Catholic marriage. It echoes the concerns that surfaced during the 1960s. Instead of presenting solutions as the study group was hoping, however, it wisely directed the reader to the basic principles of pastoral care and church authority. This paragraph is new to the second edition.

23.

It is appropriate for the same priest to prepare the couple, celebrate the Mass, preach, and receive their consent.

This new paragraph offers practical advice for pastors. Their work will bear better fruit if they work individually with couples from their preparation through the celebration of the wedding. Special mention of the homily here implies that his familiarity with the couple will inspire the message he delivers. This paragraph presumes that there will be a wedding Mass, but even in cases when there is not, the same advice holds.

The *Ceremonial of Bishops* suggests that bishops should occasionally bless marriages.⁵⁸ It uses the verb “bless” because it foresees the possibility that a priest will celebrate the Mass, whereas the bishop in choir dress presides.⁵⁹ He may of course celebrate the Mass and, in either case, he offers the nuptial blessing.⁶⁰ The church especially encourages the bishop to celebrate the weddings of the poor.⁶¹ His ministry should show no favoritism to the wealthy.

Normally the bishop is assisted by the parish priest and a deacon, along with other ministers.⁶² In practice, few bishops can take

⁵⁸ *Ceremonial of Bishops* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1989), 598. Hereafter CB.

⁵⁹ CB 601.

⁶⁰ CB 611.

⁶¹ CB 598.

⁶² CB 600.

an active part in marriage preparation, but for those who can, the advice of paragraph 23 holds. Every priest (and deacon for that matter) will exercise better ministry by guiding the couple's spiritual formation before preaching and presiding at the wedding.

24.

A deacon with faculties may preside at weddings and give the nuptial blessing.

The second edition pays greater attention to deacons, whose ministry flowered after the publication of the first edition. (The third edition of the Roman Missal similarly treats the diaconate more expansively than its predecessors did.) This new paragraph affirms two points that developed in the postconciliar church. In dioceses, deacons widely received the faculty to preside at weddings. In the universal church, deacons were authorized to give the nuptial blessing. In the past, as will be seen, this blessing was given only by the priest and only during Mass. Also, as will be seen in the commentary to Chapter II, the practice of having a deacon witness a marriage during a Mass has been questioned.

ICEL's first draft said that the deacon presided at the celebration, "including" the nuptial blessing. The wording in Latin is stronger, however, so the translation matches it: He presided "without omitting" the blessing.

25.

A bishop may delegate a layperson to assist at marriages under the correct circumstances. These include a vote by the conference of bishops and permission from the Apostolic See. The layperson should be capable of offering instruction to the engaged and of performing the liturgy.

This new paragraph comes almost completely from the Code of Canon Law, which authorizes lay witnesses to receive the consent of the couple.⁶³ This pastoral consideration assists parts of the world where priests and deacons are scarce, yet faithful Catholics desire a sacramental marriage. The couple still manifest their

⁶³ Canons 1112 §2; 1108 §2.

consent, and the assisting layperson receives it in the name of the church.

ICEL chose the words “a shortage” of priests and deacons, even though the Latin says *Ubi desunt sacerdotes et diaconi*. More literally, this means “Where priests and deacons are lacking.” One could argue that it could mean a circumstance where they are not present for other reasons. The historical, canonical, and pastoral sense of the original, however, probably does refer to a shortage of numbers.

26.

Other laypersons and indeed the entire Christian community may participate in the preparation and celebration of matrimony. They bear witness to the faith and show God’s love to the world.

Although this paragraph is new, its intention is shared by other postconciliar liturgical books. Their introductions contain sections showing how the entire Christian community is involved in all the rituals. Here, the faithful are expected to participate through preparing the couple and in bearing witness to God’s love. This brief paragraph could prompt a good brainstorming exercise within any parish: How do all the members prepare, celebrate, and bear witness to matrimony?

27.

The wedding usually takes place in the parish church of the engaged persons, but the bishop or pastor may permit another location.

Even in Latin, this sentence does not prejudice the parish of the bride or the groom. Neither is listed first. The parish of either one of the engaged is considered the normal place. By custom the church of the bride held preference, but not here.

Exceptions are permitted by law, and indeed this paragraph was put into place after the revised Code of Canon Law explained the possibility.⁶⁴ A summary of the canon now appears here as paragraph 27.

⁶⁴ Canon 1115.

Regarding the place of a wedding, a bishop should not prefer the use of a private chapel or a home but rather the cathedral or a parish church.⁶⁵ This will avoid any appearance of favoritism or outward show. By celebrating in a public space the bishop demonstrates the ecclesial nature of the wedding and grants ready access to the local community's participation.⁶⁶

III. THE CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE

The third section of the revised introduction takes up liturgical matters for the celebration of the sacrament. This parallels a similar section in other introductions developed after the first edition of the OCM.

The Preparation

The first part of this section treats the preparation for the wedding. It focuses less on the couple's preparation for married life, which the previous sections have addressed. The introduction now turns attention to what is most on the mind of most of the engaged: the wedding.

28.

Marriage is ordered to the increase and sanctification of the People of God, so it is fitting that members of the community participate. More than one couple may be married in a single ceremony. A wedding may take place during Sunday Mass.

This new paragraph introduces the section with a focus on the participation of the community. Marriage is an intimate, personal experience, but it has an effect on the entire community.

The first edition's paragraph 11 presumed the possibility of weddings taking place at a parish Sunday Mass. That paragraph has been reworked and re-presented as 31 in the second edition. But the possibility of celebrating at the parish Mass is now introduced here.

⁶⁵ CB 598.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

The French translation of the OCM in Canada carries this same paragraph; however, its lectionary, published as a separate slim volume, differs in order to account for the widespread custom that forbids weddings there on Sundays:

According to the custom established in Canada, marriage can only be celebrated on a weekday, whether with or without the eucharist. As to the possibility of celebrating marriage on Sunday, one must hold to diocesan directives.⁶⁷

The first edition's paragraph 38 included directions for how a wedding of more than one couple may take place. Its parallel still appears as number 58 in the second edition. But the option is now first presented here in the introduction to the OCM.

29.

The celebration must be diligently prepared with the engaged couple. Weddings normally take place at Mass, but the pastor may propose a celebration outside of Mass. The couple should help choose the readings, the form of consent, the blessing of rings, the nuptial blessing, the intentions for the universal prayer, and the music.

The final draft of the former paragraph 5 included a section that carried into the first edition.⁶⁸ It called for the catechesis of the couple on the sacrament and its rites, prayers, and readings, as expressed in the second edition's paragraph 17. The new paragraph 29 does more. It urges not only the catechesis of the couple but also their participation in choosing texts for the wedding.

No other ritual book so urges the inclusion of those celebrating the sacrament in its preparation. Some parish leaders have long encouraged couples to select the readings for the wedding with the help of published aids.⁶⁹ Other publications have enlisted the

⁶⁷ *Lectionnaire pour la célébration du mariage* (Ottawa: Conférence des évêques catholiques du Canada, 2011), 3.

⁶⁸ Schemata 280, p. 3.

⁶⁹ For example, Paul Turner, *Preparing the Wedding Homily: A Guide for Preachers and Couples* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2003).

couple's help in selecting presidential prayers and blessings. Many couples have strong opinions about the music. Perhaps some couples will take the time to review all the options presented in this paragraph, but many will not know about them. Nonetheless, the OCM encourages their engagement in the liturgical planning of parts of the wedding.

This paragraph is one of many that mentions the homily based on the readings. The former paragraph 5 also made this recommendation. The introduction to the Lectionary for Mass says of every homily that it should be based on the sacred text.⁷⁰ Nonetheless, the General Instruction of the Roman Missal says that it may also draw from the Ordinary or the Proper of the Mass.⁷¹

Paragraph 29 does not encourage the couple to choose from the presidential prayers—the collects, prayers over the offerings, prefaces, and prayers after communion. These apparently are left to the discretion of the celebrant.

The forms of consent are few, but the couple should have a voice in which one they will say. If they pray over the nuptial blessings, they may find one that speaks more directly to them. They may certainly have ideas about the intentions for the universal prayer. Part of their marriage preparation could include identifying groups and needs for whom they wish everyone to pray on their wedding day.

The final sentence of this paragraph says that local customs may be observed if they are appropriate. This opens the door to a variety of customs such as deeply rooted Hispanic and Filipino traditions (the *lazo*, the *arras*, and the *velación*, for example), persistent customs such as the unity candle, and future trends inconceivable at the publication of the OCM. Pastors and parishes will probably establish limiting policies that interpret words such as “local,” “customs,” and “appropriate,” but the OCM has created a space for some personalization of the wedding ceremony beyond the contents of the liturgical book.

⁷⁰ *Lectionary for Mass*, Second Typical Edition (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998). Introduction to the *Lectionary for Mass* 24. Hereafter LM.

⁷¹ *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* 65. Hereafter GIRM.

New to the postconciliar church is that marriage would take place at Mass. In the past the ceremony happened just before Mass or completely outside of Mass. To have the wedding *during* the Mass was an innovation found in paragraph 6 of the first edition of the OCM. It has become such a deep tradition within the post-Vatican II church that the freshness of this approach may be overlooked.

30.

The chants of the Mass, especially the responsorial psalm, and all the other music should express the faith of the church.

The emphasis on the responsorial psalm is curious but welcome. Many couples hire soloists for the music at their wedding without thinking much of congregational music, which is important. Perhaps the psalm is mentioned because it forms part of weddings both within and without Mass, whereas other chants of the Mass do not.

Many couples want to hear popular secular music at their weddings, especially songs that have come to represent their love because of the text or the occasion on which they have enjoyed them. In a culture where prerecorded music dominates live music even for the national anthem, many parishes struggle to convince couples that live congregational singing should be constitutive of a Catholic wedding. This new paragraph should help because it holds up faith as the criterion for judging wedding music. If those planning the wedding think of the typical parish Sunday Mass as a guide, they will find a path to appropriate wedding music.

31.

Church decorations should express the festive nature of the celebration, yet no favoritism should be shown to individuals or classes of persons.

The first part of this paragraph is new, a welcome agreement with the general practice that a church will be decorated for a wedding. Many parishes establish limiting guidelines because some couples have specific or extravagant desires that may conflict with the usage of the space or its immediate reconversion to an appearance suitable for the Sunday Mass. In some countries, wedding decorations are fairly standard, but in the United States the variety can be substantial, if not competitive. The caution seems apt, then,

that decorations should not give the ostentatious appearance of wealth. Most churches already carry some decoration for their observance of a given season, and the couple may consult with parish decorators to learn how the church will look at the time of year chosen for the wedding.

As noted in paragraph 23, the bishop should also avoid showing favoritism to certain groups. Even so, weddings are a place where societal expectations are high, and a couple who chooses not to spend lavishly on clothes and decorations will be taking a counter-cultural stand. They will need a strong spiritual center.

The second part of this paragraph is based on the concerns of favoritism expressed in the first edition of the OCM. There, paragraph 10 quoted directly from SC 32, which now appears only as a citation in the footnote. The revised paragraph instead expresses specific concerns about decorations and the role of bishops in limiting shows of favoritism.

32.

Weddings that take place on days of penitence, especially during Lent, should take account of the nature of the day. Weddings are not permitted on Good Friday or Holy Saturday.

The CB offers the same advice,⁷² which is somewhat surprising in that the book concerns the liturgies of bishops, whereas this paragraph from it pertains to pastors. Perhaps the CB realizes that pastors do more preparation and conversation with the couple than bishops typically do. Although the OCM only mentions Lent as a penitential season, the CB adds Advent to its concern.

Some Catholics still have the mistaken impression that weddings cannot take place during Lent. They may. The only days prohibited are Good Friday and Holy Saturday, when the sacraments are not to be celebrated, except for reconciliation and the anointing of the sick.⁷³ In the past, some priests have conducted convalidations of weddings on Holy Saturday for couples who were married outside the church but are now eligible for sacraments. The practice is prohibited. Pastorally, a priest should convalidate a couple's

⁷² CB 604.

⁷³ "Friday of the Passion of the Lord [Good Friday]," in Roman Missal, 1.

marriage at the earliest opportunity. Normally in this situation, one of the parties is a Catholic, and that party could return to the sacraments as soon as the convalidation takes place. The other party may be baptized or received into the church later.

Regarding the penitential nature of certain days and their impact on the splendor of wedding arrangements, pastors may advise the couple, but they may not get very far. Unless the couple are already long in the habit of conducting a Lent of penance and sacrifice, for example, the concept of a less extravagant wedding will seem strange to them. For the sake of the parish, however, the conversation is worth having. A parish that has decorated the church for repentance should still be able to recognize the character of the season.

The Rite to Be Used

The third part of the introduction carries two subheadings—one on the preparation of the celebration and the second on the rite to be used. These divisions did not appear in the first edition of the OCM, and that may have contributed to widespread ignorance about the rules governing which rite should be used on which occasion. Many pastors and parish staffs have overlooked these out of a desire to help the couple celebrate a meaningful ceremony. Every wedding takes place within the context of a liturgical year and a liturgical day. From the parish's perspective, this will govern some of the choices open to the couple.

33.

Marriage may be celebrated within or without Mass, and the appropriate chapter of the OCM is used. A wedding without Mass still includes a Liturgy of the Word.

This brief paragraph is new to the second edition. The edition actually includes chapters treating some other circumstances, but the primary concern here is the decision pertaining to the celebration of Mass. If the wedding includes Mass, the liturgical calendar comes more strongly into play.

34.

When the ritual Mass "For the Celebration of Marriage" is used, white or festive vestments are worn. In 1965, the Vatican had

already permitted the use of this Mass during “closed times.”⁷⁴ The nuptial blessing, not the votive Mass, was forbidden during Advent and Lent. Now, however, on the Table of Liturgical Days, any celebration listed under the first four paragraphs supersedes the ritual Mass of marriage with its presidential prayers and readings. The ritual Mass may be celebrated on Sundays in Ordinary Time except at parish Masses. (The same is true of the Second Sunday of Christmas in those conferences that retain the Epiphany of the Lord as a holy day on January 6.) The rules restricting the use of the ritual Mass pertain to the lectionary as well as the Missal. On some occasions, however, when the ritual Mass is set aside, one of its readings may replace a reading of the stronger day.

This paragraph now makes an important link to the Table of Liturgical Days. The first edition of the OCM listed specific days of conflict in its paragraph 11, but it did not account for everything in the Table. The CB lists the information accurately but differently.⁷⁵ Happily, the third edition of the Roman Missal now matches paragraph 34 of the OCM.⁷⁶ This link to the Table of Liturgical Days, found in the front of the Missal among the Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the Calendar, provides better cohesion between these liturgical books.

The celebrant wears vestments that are white or of a festive color when he uses the ritual Mass. The CB concurs.⁷⁷ When a wedding takes place within a celebration of higher rank, however, the vestment color for that day takes precedence.

Here is how the Table of Liturgical Days ranks the first four categories:

1. The Paschal Triduum ranks first. This should be obvious, but no special wedding Mass may take place between the evening of Holy Thursday and the night of Easter Sunday. In fact, no Mass may take place on Good Friday or Holy Saturday. There is no law forbidding a couple to exchange their consent during the Evening

⁷⁴ IO 75.

⁷⁵ CB Appendix 3.

⁷⁶ Roman Missal, “Ritual Masses: V. For the Celebration of Marriage.” Hereafter Roman Missal, Marriage.

⁷⁷ CB 603.

Mass of the Lord's Supper or during a Mass on Easter Sunday or its Vigil. Pastorally, though, there would have to be a very good reason for this to happen during a parish's celebration of the Triduum. Baptisms often take place during the Easter Vigil or even at Mass on Easter Sunday. Theoretically, a wedding could as well. But it is probably not the best way for the couple or the parish to celebrate the Triduum.

2. Ranking second on the table are several specific days: Christmas, Epiphany, Ascension, and Pentecost; then Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter; Ash Wednesday; weekdays of Holy Week from Monday through Thursday before the evening Mass; and finally the days within the Octave of Easter.

This greatly affects any wedding Mass scheduled on the Saturday evening of Epiphany or of Advent, Lent, and Easter. It even applies to a wedding during the day on the Saturday after Easter. All those days rank second on the Table, well ahead of weddings. If a wedding Mass takes place on a Saturday night in Advent or Lent, for example, the prayers and readings of the season take precedence; the celebrant wears purple. If the wedding is on the first Saturday afternoon after Easter, the readings and presidential prayers from Saturday of the Octave of Easter are proclaimed.

This applies to a wedding Mass. If the wedding takes place outside of Mass, there is no conflict, and the readings and prayers of the wedding may be used.

3. Solemnities appear in two groups. The first is the collection of solemnities that appear on the general calendar, as well as All Souls' Day.

This would affect, for example, a Saturday afternoon wedding Mass on the following days: Mary Mother of God (January 1), Saint Joseph (March 19), the Annunciation (March 25), the Nativity of John the Baptist (June 24), Saints Peter and Paul (June 29), the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (August 15), All Saints' (November 1), All Souls' (November 2), and the Immaculate Conception (December 8).

It also would affect a Saturday night wedding Mass on solemnities of the Most Holy Trinity, the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi), and Our Lord Jesus Christ the King of the Universe.

The Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus always falls on a Friday, but if a wedding Mass were scheduled for that day, the Sacred Heart readings and prayers would take precedence.

4. The second group of solemnities pertains to the location: the principal patron of the place, city, or state; the dedication or anniversary of dedication of the church where the wedding is scheduled; the title of one's church; or the title, founder, or patron of a religious order or congregation.

If the parish is named St. Anthony, for example, then a wedding Mass that takes place on June 13 in that church uses the readings and prayers of the Mass for St. Anthony. If a wedding Mass takes place on August 25 anywhere in the city of St. Louis, the saint's day trumps the ritual Mass for marriage. Every parish is supposed to observe the anniversary of its dedication as a solemnity each year with a special Mass, using the readings and prayers of the solemnity. Often this goes unobserved because of ignorance of the day or of the custom. If a wedding Mass is scheduled on that day, however, the couple should hear the collect for the anniversary of the dedication of the building where they have gathered for the wedding. If the parish is staffed by Franciscans, and the wedding takes place on October 4, then the prayers and readings for St. Francis are to be used.

This may strike many people as incomprehensible, but the sacrament of matrimony takes place within a living parish community that participates in a general church calendar. Although the couple will tell you that this is the most important day of their lives, certain elements of the day are subject to other forces. There are secular conflicts as well—weddings take place on somebody's birthday, on Valentine's Day, or unexpectedly in the midst of the local baseball team's championship series. No wedding takes place in isolation. It is always part of the fabric of church and social life.

No matter which Mass is used, the nuptial blessing is included. This was important to note because in the preconiliar liturgy the nuptial blessing was forbidden at Mass during Advent and Lent, on All Souls' Day, and during the Triduum.⁷⁸ In those cases the

⁷⁸ *Missale Romanum*, p. [75].

blessing transferred to a more convenient Mass after the wedding had taken place.

Participating at a Saturday evening wedding Mass always fulfills a Catholic's Sunday obligation. The Code of Canon Law says that the precept is satisfied by assistance "at a Mass" either on the day or the evening of the preceding day.⁷⁹ Any Mass will suffice. It is up to the priest to provide the correct Mass. On a Sunday in Ordinary Time, he chooses the ritual Mass of marriage (as long as it is not a parish Mass). On other occasions he should celebrate the appropriate Sunday Mass. A Saturday night wedding without Mass, of course, does not fulfill the precept; Catholics who participate at such a service are expected to participate at Mass the same weekend.

The paragraph concludes with a pastoral note about the readings at a Mass that takes precedence over the wedding Mass. Because of the importance of the word of God for understanding matrimony, one of the readings from the marriage lectionary may replace a reading assigned to the liturgical day. Comparing this with OCM 56, however, this permission refers only to the preceding sentence about Sundays in Ordinary Time, and not to every celebration in the first four numbers of the Table of Liturgical Days. When these paragraphs, composed in 1991, were copied into the third edition of the Missal for its ritual Mass of marriage in 2002, the final paragraph permitting the substitution of one reading was omitted. Its retention here is probably an oversight, corrected in OCM 56.

Most of this information is repeated in OCM 54 and can be found in the Missal's ritual Mass for marriage.

35.

The main elements of the wedding are the Liturgy of the Word, the consent of the engaged, the nuptial blessing, and communion. The paragraph footnotes two documents of the Second Vatican

⁷⁹ Canon 1248 §1.

Council, but both references pertain to the sacraments in general, rather than matrimony in particular.⁸⁰

This is the former paragraph 6, moved into a section of the introduction that deals with the liturgy, carefully edited. The original remarked that marriage usually takes place within Mass; that is now part of paragraph 29. The first edition said that the priest asks and receives the consent, and that he gives the nuptial blessing; both mentions of the priest have been omitted because a deacon may also perform these functions. The first edition referred to the special blessing on the bride, but the second edition more correctly calls it the nuptial blessing (over both bride and groom). The final phrase was clarified to show that not just any charity, but “their” charity is nourished, referring to communicants. The second edition also changed the unusual usage of the first person plural in the original paragraph (“lifts us up”) to the third person plural (“they are raised up”).

Couples who look forward to the exchange of consent and the rings, the nuptial blessing, and the *lazo* may consider these alone to be the “main elements” of the celebration. Nonetheless, many will take an interest in the Liturgy of the Word when given an opportunity, and Catholics asking for a nuptial Mass generally do anticipate sacramental communion.

36.

When a Catholic marries a baptized non-Catholic the ceremony without Mass should be used. The local ordinary may permit the celebration within Mass. The universal norms for sharing eucharistic communion still apply. Marriage between a Catholic and a catechumen or non-Christian uses the appropriate rite in Chapter III.

Many Catholic weddings take place at Mass even if one party is a baptized non-Catholic. A bishop may grant this permission in general to the priests to whom he gives faculties.

The Rite of Matrimony without Mass often provides the better environment. Many of those participating will not know when to stand, sit, or kneel. They will be unfamiliar with the responses to

⁸⁰ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity) 3, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html; LG 12.

the dialogues. They will not be sharing eucharistic communion. A wedding without Mass puts the entire congregation on more equal footing and invites a fuller sign of unity.

This paragraph updates the former paragraph 8, which declared that the general law does not allow communion to a non-Catholic. The norms for sharing communion with non-Catholic Christians, however, were revised after the first edition of the OCM. As found in the Vatican's Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism,⁸¹ they are not so exclusive.

The directory first addresses cases involving danger of death; otherwise, it refers a diocesan bishop to norms established by the conference and in consultation with the local competent authority of the other church or ecclesial community. "Catholic ministers will judge individual cases and administer these sacraments only in accord with these established norms, where they exist. Otherwise they will judge according to the norms of this Directory."⁸²

Regarding eucharistic communion at a wedding, the directory states, "Although the spouses in a mixed marriage share the sacraments of baptism and marriage, Eucharistic sharing can only be exceptional and in each case the norms stated above concerning the admission of a non-Catholic Christian to Eucharistic communion as well as those concerning the participation of a Catholic in Eucharistic communion in another Church, must be observed."⁸³

The conditions are "that the person be unable to have recourse for the sacrament desired to a minister of his or her own Church or ecclesial Community, ask for the sacrament of his or her own initiative, manifest Catholic faith in this sacrament and be properly disposed."⁸⁴

In short, the circumstances when a baptized non-Catholic may receive communion at a Catholic wedding exist, but they are quite few, primarily because they would require a situation in which the

⁸¹ The Pontifical Council for Promoting the Unity of Christians, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_25031993_principles-and-norms-on-ecumenism_en.html.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 130.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 131.

non-Catholic Christian does not have persistent access to a minister of his or her own community.

The Mexican edition inserts two more paragraphs to the introduction at this point.

37. This ritual includes the rite of the blessing and giving of the *arras*, a great tradition in Mexico, which serves to express unity of life and of possessions established between the couple.

38. Because the “imposition of the *lazo*” is customary in many regions of Mexico, this ritual proposes that this take place immediately after the universal prayer (or the creed, when it is said), but it may be kept until the nuptial blessing. The giving of a bible, for those regions in which this custom exists, may be done at the end of the giving of the *arras*.⁸⁵

As will be seen, most of these appear in the US edition in OCM 67B, 71B, and their parallels: 101A, 103B, 133, and 137.

37.

Pastors, who care for all people, should give special attention to those who never or rarely take part in celebrations of matrimony or of the Eucharist. If one or both of the spouses are among those at the margins of faith, this norm applies first to them.

This reworks and repositions the material in the former paragraph 9. It started as an outreach to those who participate rarely or who have lost faith.⁸⁶ The wording was taken almost directly from the first chapter of the most recent draft of the Order of Christian Funerals, which had been approved in 1966.⁸⁷ That paragraph was slightly reworked and moved to the introduction. In English editions of the funeral order, it can be found in the appendix.⁸⁸ The version in the second edition of the OCM includes nonpracticing spouses as those for whom pastors should especially be solicitous.

⁸⁵ *Ritual del Matrimonio* (México, D. F.: Obra Nacional de la Buena Prensa, A. C., 2011), 35. Hereafter *Ritual* (Mexico).

⁸⁶ Schemata 204, p. 2, there as paragraph 8.

⁸⁷ Schemata 142, p. 1 (paragraph 3). The reference is footnoted in Schemata 221, p. 6 (paragraph 9).

⁸⁸ “*Ordo Exsequiarum* Introduction” 18, *Order of Christian Funerals* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990).

38.

For a wedding within Mass, the usual arrangement of a sanctuary should include the placement of the OCM and the rings for the couple. Optional are a bucket of blessed water and a sprinkler, as well as a chalice of sufficient size for sharing the blood of Christ at communion.

This new paragraph provides information similar in content to other liturgical books. It offers practical advice for preparing the sanctuary before the celebration. Although it appears that the rings are obligatory, if they are incompatible with a particular culture, they may be omitted or replaced by another sign.⁸⁹

A bishop will need his miter and pastoral staff, even if he is just presiding and not celebrating the Mass.⁹⁰ The English translation of the CB misspeaks when it says that these will be necessary for the nuptial blessing. Rather, they are needed for the final blessing.⁹¹ If he is presiding, the bishop wears an alb, pectoral cross, stole, and white cope,⁹² though presumably the color of the cope would change if the Mass requires a different one. The CB, which was republished in 2008 long after the second edition of the OCM in Latin, does not note here that the blessed water is optional.

This paragraph updates information from the preconconciliar ceremony. Because the marriage took place before Mass, the only items needed for the ceremony were the book, the vessel for blessed water, and the sprinkler.⁹³

IV. ADAPTATIONS TO BE PREPARED BY THE CONFERENCES OF BISHOPS

This final section of the introduction collects and expands information from paragraphs 12–18 of the first edition concerning adaptations. Introductions to other liturgical books conclude in a similar way.

⁸⁹ OCM 41, 5.

⁹⁰ CB 599.

⁹¹ CB 611, 613.

⁹² CB 601.

⁹³ *Roman Ritual*, 460.

39.

Conferences of bishops may adapt this ceremony according to regional needs with the approval of the Apostolic See.

The need for such adaptations has always been acknowledged. Even the pre-Vatican II book noted that praiseworthy customs and ceremonies could be retained wherever they were in use.⁹⁴

This is the first of several paragraphs that Seumoys had originally edited because of his expertise in the needs of mission countries and the value of adaptation.⁹⁵ His draft cited SC 77 and 78, which dealt specifically with adaptations to the marriage ceremony.⁹⁶ The study group's commentary on this paragraph explained,

Since the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy itself grants special importance to adaptations as to the administration of the sacraments (art. 39) and especially as to the rite of matrimony (art. 77), a place has been left for "legitimate adaptations to different . . . peoples, especially in the missions" (art. 38), whether "in the structures of the rites," or "in the rubrics." (art. 38)⁹⁷

This second draft of the introduction also included a reference to SC 63, which gave additional guidelines for cultural adaptations.⁹⁸ The third draft contained a further clarification:

The second chapter of the Introduction gives some directives on the preparation of rituals particular to matrimony, especially in mission countries, according to articles 63 and 67 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, and recalls the faculty given by the conciliar Constitution to episcopal conferences to prepare their own ritual of matrimony.⁹⁹

The second edition of the OCM has trimmed paragraph 12 and repositioned it here as paragraph 39. It has clarified the canonical language and put the references to SC 63 and 77 in a footnote.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 464–66.

⁹⁵ Gy, [Letter to the Consilium], Schemata 204, [i]. Bugnini, *Reform of the Liturgy*, 697.

⁹⁶ Schemata 204, p. 3, there as paragraph 11.

⁹⁷ Schemata 221, p. 3.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7, there as paragraph 12.

⁹⁹ Schemata 280, p. i.

40.

The conferences of bishops formulate adaptations, adapt and supplement the introduction as necessary, in order to foster the participation of the faithful, to prepare versions of the texts and music to accommodate languages and cultures, and to arrange the materials in a usable form.

This new paragraph gathers into one place the responsibilities of the conferences of bishops. Their work still needs the approval of the Apostolic See.

SC famously called for the full, conscious, active participation of the people.¹⁰⁰ That call found its way into the introductory material here, as it did in the introductions of other liturgical books, such as the Rite of Baptism for Children,¹⁰¹ the Rite of Confirmation,¹⁰² the Rite of Pastoral Care of the Sick,¹⁰³ and in the congregational catechesis expected for the Rite of the Dedication of a Church and an Altar.¹⁰⁴

The introduction permits conferences to rearrange the material in the book to make it more user-friendly for the celebrant. The translations in force for the episcopal conferences of England and Wales,¹⁰⁵ French Canada,¹⁰⁶ and Colombia,¹⁰⁷ for example, have moved some of the material such as alternative collects from the appendices into the body of the book, where they are more accessible to the presider. Other conferences did not receive permission for that particular change, such as those of Australia¹⁰⁸ and Mexico.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁰ SC 14.

¹⁰¹ Rite of Baptism for Children 32, in *The Rites*, 376.

¹⁰² Rite of Confirmation 3, in *The Rites*, 479.

¹⁰³ Pastoral Care of the Sick 38, in *The Rites*, 787.

¹⁰⁴ Dedication of a Church and an Altar 20, in *The Rites of the Catholic Church*, vol. 2 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 365.

¹⁰⁵ *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2016). Hereafter OCMEW.

¹⁰⁶ *Rituel Romain de la célébration du mariage* (Ottawa: Conférence des évêques catholiques du Canada, 2011). Hereafter *Rituel Romain*.

¹⁰⁷ *Ritual del Matrimonio* [Cali: Comisión Episcopal de Liturgia, 2004]. Hereafter Ritual (Colombia).

¹⁰⁸ *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony* (Strathfield: St. Pauls, 2015). Hereafter OCMAUS.

¹⁰⁹ Ritual (Mexico).

41.

Regarding adaptations, (1) the formulas may be adapted and supplemented; (2) where options exist, more may be added; (3) the order of the parts may be adapted; (4) the consent may be obtained through questions; (5) the crowning of the bride or the veiling of the spouses may take place; (6) the joining of hands and the use of rings may be omitted or replaced; (7) elements of tradition and cultures may be adopted.

This combines material from several of the first edition's paragraphs. The first two points come from paragraph 13; the third point comes from 14; the fourth point comes from a pastoral note from the original paragraph 45 within the rite; the fifth point comes from paragraph 15, as does the sixth. The seventh is new.

Basic principles had been laid out in the study group's communication that accompanied its first schemata. As the Second Vatican Council had done, the groups looked back to a much-cited paragraph from the Council of Trent. It also looked around at variations already in force.

Concerning local liturgical customs, the Second Vatican Council repeats the words of the Council of Trent: "If certain provinces use other praiseworthy customs and ceremonies, the Holy Synod strongly desires that these be completely retained" (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 77 B = Council of Trent Session XXIV, concerning the Reformation, 1; see Roman Ritual 1952, VIII, II, 6). Indeed from the famous Council of Trent until now, there can be found local usages in the rituals of Matrimony, which often repeat an original one from the Middle Ages: in the expression of consent, in the words of the priest after the consent, in certain prayers and even in the place for blessing and giving the ring to be bestowed; other words of consent are found and contained in the Roman Ritual, for example, in German- or Slavic-speaking nations, in dioceses of Belgium, in the Toledo Ritual, and in English-speaking nations the words of consent are carried out through that most famous formula, which will be treated later under no. 18; the formula "I join you" is not precisely found in the Toledo Ritual, nor has it been accepted anywhere in Germany or in Poland.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Schemata 182a, p. 4.

Paragraph 41 ultimately descends from the draft first edited by Seumois to answer the need for adaptations in missionary countries.¹¹¹ For the subsequent draft, immediately following its remarks on SC 38's call to adapt structures and rubrics,¹¹² the study group further explained,

As to the structure of the rite of matrimony, a fitting flexibility is proposed in numbers 14 and 15; as to the texts, flexibility is proposed in number 13, whose second part has already been approved by the Fathers for the Order of Funerals.¹¹³

The introduction to the Order of Funerals had been approved in 1966, and it still includes permission for conferences of bishops "to add different formularies of the same type whenever the Roman Ritual provides optional formularies."¹¹⁴ Hence, when the ritual provided two or three options, even without specifying "in these or similar words," the Congregation's intent was to permit the free composition of further variations. This principle applied to the OCM whenever it presented multiple options.

The second draft of the introduction added a footnote about adapting and supplementing the formulas. This became the first point in OCM 41 (second edition):

There may be present, for example, particular difficulties (like polygamy), of which mention will have to be made in the questions before the consent. The actual formula of consent that is proposed, although it may be very favorable among the English-speaking nations where it has been in use for a long time, may perhaps seem too long to other nations and ought to be abbreviated.

In the prayer over the bride, certain adaptations will be useful in some places; for example, in the *Collection* of rites in Germany the omission of the names of the holy women in the Old Testament was

¹¹¹ Gy, [Letter to the Consilium], Schemata 204, [i]. Bugnini, *Reform of the Liturgy*, 697. In this Schemata, the paragraphs ultimately numbered 14 and 15 for the first edition appear as 16 and 17.

¹¹² See comments on OCM 39.

¹¹³ Schemata 221, p. 3.

¹¹⁴ *Order of Christian Funerals*, Appendix, Introduction 22, 3.

seen appropriate; but the words “joined to one bed,” which ought to be retained where the danger of polygamy is present, finds perhaps less favor elsewhere.¹¹⁵

The fifth point of OCM 41 concerns the option of crowning the bride or veiling the couple. A remnant of the ancient custom of veiling persists in Hispanic and Filipino traditions. The USCCB has made provision for it in OCM 67a.

Crowning, however, is more common in churches of the East. (Veiling also occurred in the East but was probably borrowed from Roman usage.¹¹⁶) The Armenian Rite included the blessing and wearing of crowns as early as the fourth century.¹¹⁷ Gregory Nazianzen (+389) was familiar with the custom of crowning,¹¹⁸ and he interpreted it as a celebration of victory over concupiscence.¹¹⁹ John Chrysostom (+407) likewise interpreted the crowns as symbols of the couple’s victory over passion.¹²⁰ By the tenth century prayers for crowning included formulas such as “The Father blesses, the Son is well pleased, and the Holy Spirit crowns.”¹²¹ The twelfth-century formula, “The servant of God N. is crowned,” is inspired by the passive voice used in baptismal formulas, “The servant of God N. is baptized.”¹²²

Theodore the Studite taught that the church should not bless second marriages, even though they were legal, and the rite of crowning could not be repeated.¹²³ If the crowning at one’s first marriage set passions free, a second marriage could not authentically symbolize the crowning of restraint. Thus the crowns achieved

¹¹⁵ Schemata 221, pp. 7–8.

¹¹⁶ Stefano Parenti, “The Christian Rite of Marriage in the East,” in *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, vol. 4, Sacraments and Sacramentals, ed. Anscar J. Chupungco (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 263, citing *In epistolam I ad Timotheum*, Hom. 9, PG 62:546, 51–52.

¹¹⁷ Stevenson, *To Join Together*, 59.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹¹⁹ Parenti, “Christian Rite of Marriage in the East,” 256.

¹²⁰ Stevenson, *To Join Together*, 21.

¹²¹ Parenti, “Christian Rite of Marriage in the East,” 263.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 263–64.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 268.

some irrepeatable consecratory function, which the Latin Rite long attributed to the nuptial blessing, as will be seen in OCM 74.

Today's Byzantine Rite notes that the crowns recall those with which the martyrs are crowned in heaven. The priest says of the bridegroom, "The servant of God, _____, is crowned unto the handmaiden of God, _____: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." He proclaims a similar text as the bride receives her crown. The reader then proclaims an adaptation of Psalm 21 (20):3, which recalls the crowning of the king.¹²⁴

In the Coptic Rite, the crowning follows an anointing of the couple. The priest offers a prayer to God who has crowned saints with imperishable crowns, that he bless the crowns to be placed on the couple. Among the requests is this: "Grant to your servants who will wear these crowns an angel of peace and the bond of love. Strengthen them against all shameful thoughts and indecent desires." The priest also prays for the faithfulness of the children to be born of this union. As he crowns the couple, the choir sings, "Crown them with honor and glory. The Father blesses, the Son crowns, the Holy Spirit sanctifies and makes perfect. Worthy, worthy, worthy are the groom and his companion."¹²⁵

In the Armenian Rite, as the crowns are removed, the priest prays, "[I]nstead of the crowns that pass away may the angel of peace guard them holy and spotless, one in spirit and in counsel."¹²⁶ The concluding prayer in the East Syrian Rite asks "that their children may be worthy of the ornaments of this day."¹²⁷ Thus, the crowns, which have highlighted the chaste couple's victory over passions, are to inspire a new virtuous generation.

The Italian ceremony permits the crowning of the spouses where this is customary or with permission of the ordinary. It sees the crowning as "a sign of their participation in the royalty of Christ." The priest crosses his arms to place one crown on the

¹²⁴ Searle and Stevenson, *Documents of the Marriage Liturgy*, 69–70.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 93–95.

¹²⁶ Stevenson, *To Join Together*, 61.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 70.

groom and then the other on the bride, while saying, “N., (servant of God), receive N., (servant of God), as a crown.”¹²⁸

OCM 41 permits the crowning of the *bride* where this is customary, but it is not customary in the Latin Rite. And in the Eastern Rite, both bride and groom customarily wear crowns. The permission was included from the early drafts of the postconciliar ceremony,¹²⁹ and it found its way into paragraph 15 of the first edition. Perhaps it was another way of expressing a tradition around the veiling of the bride. Or perhaps it intends to offer pastoral care in a circumstance where an Eastern Rite bride marries a Latin Rite groom in a Latin Rite ceremony. Or the mention of the bride may have intended to forge a link with the traditional blessing of the bride. Or this could have been an oversight left uncorrected.

Regarding the sixth point on omitting the rings and the joining of hands, the study group was familiar with exceptions.

The future Roman Ritual of matrimony should not only keep local customs intact, but also keep in view difficulties proper to any cultures different from European culture. This principle of adaptation, which is enunciated in articles 37–40 of the Constitution, was in use long ago for the liturgy of matrimony. Thus the first Ritual in Japan, in the year 1605, omitted the giving of the ring and changed the rite of the joining of hands (see F.-X. Tsuchiya, S.J., *Das älteste bekannte Missions-Rituale: [The Oldest Known Missions Ritual:] Nagasaki 1605*, *Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift* 1963, pp. 221–232). The same Holy Office in the year 1892 gave permission to the archbishop of Pondicherry in India of substituting for the nuptial ring a token called *tali*, dangling from the neck of the bride. (*Collectanea S. Propagandae*, 1893, pp. 573–74)¹³⁰

The group wanted these freedoms acknowledged in the introduction, so this part of the former paragraph 15 has been repeated in OCM 41. Both editions of the OCM express considerable openness to adaptations.

¹²⁸ *Rito del Matrimonio* 78, <http://www.liturgia.maranatha.it/Matrimonio/r1/3page.htm>.

¹²⁹ Schemata 204, p. 3.

¹³⁰ Schemata 182a, p. 4.

42.

Conferences of bishops may compose their own marriage rite with the approval of the Apostolic See. The minister must ask for and receive the couple's consent, and the couple must receive the nuptial blessing.

This lightly edits paragraph 17 of the first edition, which required a priest to preside, whereas the second edition tacitly acknowledges the possible ministry of a deacon or assisting layperson. The second edition requires that its introduction be included in any adapted rite, adjusted where necessary to explain the flow of the ceremony that follows.

Traces of this paragraph can be found in the drafts, which required a priest to receive the consent of the couple.¹³¹ The drafts had merely repeated what SC 77 had envisioned.¹³² The inclusion of the nuptial blessing in such ceremonies had also come at the request of the Second Vatican Council.¹³³

43.

When peoples receive the gospel for the first time, their wedding customs should be considered and preserved intact if they are honorable and do not represent superstitious errors.

This is the former paragraph 16, moved a little later in the introduction probably because it pertains to a more unusual circumstance. The paragraph still cites SC 37, the first of its paragraphs for adapting the liturgy to the cultures and traditions of peoples.

In the drafts, this was another part of the introduction reworked by Seumois, though his was a bit shorter than the final version.¹³⁴ The first version was later amplified with one of the explanatory comments that the study had made to accompany its introduction.¹³⁵ Its call for preserving customs "intact" was inserted here, where it has endured in this paragraph through the remaining drafts and both editions of the OCM.

¹³¹ Schemata 204, p. 4.

¹³² SC 77, noted in Schemata 221, p. 3, there as paragraph 16.

¹³³ SC 78, noted in Schemata 221, p. 9, there as paragraph 17.

¹³⁴ Gy, [Letter to the Consilium], Schemata 204, [i].

¹³⁵ Schemata 182a, pp. 3–4, cited above.

44.

Among peoples where the marriage ceremony customarily takes place in homes, even over several days, their conferences of bishops may determine if the Catholic sacrament can also be celebrated in homes.

This is the former paragraph 18, which likewise brought the introduction to its conclusion. It has been the final paragraph since its earliest draft.¹³⁶ In a commentary, the study group said that in this paragraph “the case is considered of those cultures among which matrimony is accustomed to be celebrated in homes, as was permitted in the Roman Ritual itself up to the 19th century.”¹³⁷ Once again, the study group made its appeal to adaptation based on previous permissions.

The revised introduction greatly amplifies the one from the first edition. It includes additional resources unavailable at the time, notably the revised Code of Canon Law and John Paul II’s apostolic exhortation on families. More significant, it has rearranged the material to match other introductions to liturgical books and to provide a more logical flow of its contents. Editorial corrections have also enhanced the quality of the work.

The chapters that follow show great editorial care as well: attention to titles, subtitles, rubrics, sense lines for spoken texts, the description of the entrance procession, the choice of the Mass and the readings.¹³⁸ Although it is believed that Christians held marriage ceremonies at an early date, the earliest extant complete marriage service is found in the fourteenth-century ritual from the Cistercian Abbey of Barbeau in the Diocese of Sens, France.¹³⁹ The second edition of the OCM is the latest of its descendants.

¹³⁶ Schemata 204, p. 4, there as paragraph 21.

¹³⁷ Schemata 221, p. 3.

¹³⁸ Evanou, “Commentarium,” 313.

¹³⁹ Searle and Stevenson, *Documents of the Marriage Liturgy*, 156.

I. The Order of Celebrating Matrimony within Mass

The opening chapter, as in the previous edition, presents the celebration of matrimony within Mass. The Second Vatican Council declared that marriage is normally to be celebrated this way.¹ The Sacred Congregation of Rites strengthened this stance in 1965 while the council was still in session: “Unless there is some good, excusing reason, marriage shall be celebrated within Mass, after the gospel and homily.”²

Prior to the council, the nuptial Mass followed the wedding. The Eastern Rites do not have a close link between marriage and the Eucharist.³ The study group commented on this change in perspective.

According to article 78 of the Constitution, matrimony *ex more*, that is, ordinarily, must be celebrated within mass. That is “without the imposition of any obligation” because the celebration of matrimony within mass sometimes cannot take place “because of practical difficulties of places or times.” (Statement of Archbishop Hallinan on emendations, p. 9)⁴

Contemporary to the Council of Trent, the 1543 marriage ceremony of Metz, France, incorporated marriage within the nuptial Mass. The consent occurred at the offertory, and the giving of the

¹ SC 78.

² IO 70.

³ Kenneth W. Stevenson, *To Join Together: The Rite of Marriage* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1987), 80.

⁴ Schemata 182a, p. 5; see also Schemata 157, p. 5.

ring and marriage prayers after the post-communion.⁵ When the study group set to work on implementing the council's vision, and specifically its request to have weddings within Mass, the members knew that the Metz ritual offered a precedent, "according to which matrimony is celebrated not before Mass nor immediately after the gospel, but at the time of the offertory and in connection with the procession of the offertory's bread and wine."⁶

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

The First Form

45.

Vested for Mass, the priest goes with servers to the church door, where he receives and joyfully welcomes the bridal party.

This is most of the former paragraph 19. The first edition included two options here, one permitting the priest to greet the couple at the door, the other to greet them at the altar. Now these have been separated into two distinct descriptions of the entrance. The second option begins at OCM 48.

The first edition stated that the rite of welcome could be omitted. This has been removed from both options for a wedding within Mass, but it remains in the circumstance of marriage between a Catholic and a catechumen or a non-Christian. There, OCM 155 permits the option of omitting the welcome and starting with the Liturgy of the Word. But here it may not be omitted.

The priest may say whatever words of welcome he wishes. These are directed to the people at the door and are meant to be "off-mic": a private, not a public greeting.

Both editions of the OCM optimistically begin this paragraph with the view that the ceremony will begin "at the appointed time." Weddings rarely do. The phrase, however, is less an admonition to punctuality as a concession that the postconciliar liturgy's preferred opening words cannot be used. The Introductory Rites of the Order of Mass say that the service begins "When the people are

⁵ Mark Searle and Kenneth W. Stevenson, *Documents of the Marriage Liturgy* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 99.

⁶ Schemata 157, p. 5.

gathered.”⁷ This replaced the preconconciliar rubric that Mass begins with “The vested priest.”⁸ At the start of a wedding, however, the people are not yet gathered. The bride and groom have not yet made their entrance. In lieu of describing the status of the assembly, the postconciliar rubric simply notes that the ceremony gets underway at the appointed time.

The color of the vestments for the Mass is established by the criteria in OCM 34. If the priest offers the Ritual Mass for the Celebration of Marriage, then he wears white; if he celebrates the Mass of the day, then its vestment color prevails. The first draft of the postconciliar ceremony simply mentioned that the priest was vested in a chasuble.⁹ It did not mention the other vestments nor the color. The next draft had him wearing a chasuble of “festive color.”¹⁰

The Roman Ritual of 1614 had the priest wearing a surplice and white stole.¹¹ The preconconciliar missal required white vesture for the Mass for the spouses.¹²

The servers are mentioned in this paragraph probably because the preconconciliar rite said the priest should be assisted by at least a cleric wearing a surplice.¹³ No vesture is mentioned for the servers because that is treated in the GIRM, which says that servers may wear an alb or “other appropriate and dignified clothing.”¹⁴

No rubrics tell the bride and the groom what to wear. There are traditions, however. As the history of the title of the ceremony shows, the service was sometimes called the “veiling of the bride.” Hence, a long tradition is widely retained that the bride wears a veil on her head.

Traditionally, the bride also wears a white gown. It is assumed that the color refers to purity, even to virginity. Isidore of Seville used to bind the newly married bride and groom with a white and purple

⁷ Roman Missal, Order of Mass 1. Hereafter OM.

⁸ *Missale Romanum, Ordo Missæ.*

⁹ Schemata 182 add, p. 2, there as paragraph 1.

¹⁰ Schemata 204, p. 4, there as paragraph 22.

¹¹ *Roman Ritual*, 460.

¹² *Missale Romanum, “Rubricæ generales,”* 121d.

¹³ *Roman Ritual*, 460.

¹⁴ GIRM 339.

cord: “white pertains to purity of life, purple to the children of their blood.”¹⁵ Later rituals, however, demand no color for her dress.

When a bishop celebrates a wedding Mass, he wears Mass vestments and uses the miter and pastoral staff.¹⁶ If he presides but does not celebrate, “he wears an alb, pectoral cross, stole, and white cope, and uses the miter and pastoral staff.”¹⁷ In that case, a vested priest celebrates the Mass. Deacons and other ministers dress appropriately.¹⁸

The rubric envisions that the priest and servers go to the door to receive the couple. This innovation made up for an absence in the preconiliar liturgy, which had the bride and groom kneeling before the altar, but never explained how they got there.¹⁹ Into this vacuum, elaborate processions stepped. The greeting at the door was not intended to circumvent the procession but to demonstrate the welcome of the local church and to help the wedding party transition from the outside world to the religious celebration.

It had historical precedents—but with a different purpose. In some places, the ceremony began at the door. For example, a twelfth-century manuscript of a seventh-century practice notes that all come to the doors of the church where the priest blessed the ring and gave it to the groom. After these prayers, the assembly entered the church.²⁰ The eleventh-century English Missal of Bury St. Edmunds similarly has the ring ceremony at the beginning but outside the door of the church. Still in the public square, the priest then formally asked the groom and then the bride if they consented to marriage. After the giving of the ring and the dowry,

¹⁵ Korbinian Ritzer, *Formen, Riten und Religiöses Brauchtum der Eheschliessung in den Christlichen Kirchen des Ersten Jahrtausends* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1962), 352.

¹⁶ CB 601.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ *Roman Ritual*, 460.

²⁰ Adrien Nocent, “Il matrimonio cristiano,” in *La Liturgica: I Sacramenti: Teologia e storia della celebrazione*, Anamnesis 3/1 (Genova: Casa Editrice Marietti, 1989), 348, citing *De Antiquis Ecclesiae Ritibus*, 1. I, c. IX, a. V, 356–59, in A.-G. Martimort, *La documentation liturgique* . . .

all entered the church for the Mass and the nuptial blessing.²¹ This tradition perhaps explains how the preconconciliar wedding came to take place before the Mass instead of during it. The door of the church served as the sanctuary of the wedding.

In drafting the postconciliar marriage ceremony, the study group hoped to recover the significance of the door. In the first draft they wrote,

The reception of the groom and the bride may take place at the entrance of the church according to the local custom.

In this case the Roman Ritual can propose a rite of reception by way of example, with great flexibility, that the legitimate customs of peoples or regions not be unduly disturbed.²²

The study group shared elements of the discussion in a summary of the minutes of the meeting. The relator was Gy.

The reception of the couple. (1) Where? a) Why not in front of the altar and the sanctuary gates (Ansgar Dirks)? b) Or no reception, or let it happen at the entrance of the church, which now is the last vestige of matrimony celebrated at the double doors of the church (Johannes Wagner).

(2) *Obligatory or no?* a) Not obligatory (Relator, Wagner). The couple will have to wait longer (Aimé-Georges Martimort); that's not true everywhere; for example, in Belgium (François Vanderbroucke). b) Let it be required so that they may cross into a religious "climate" (Cellier). c) It may at least be positively recommended in the rubrics that the entrance may become sacred; there are great benefits (Anselmo Lentini).²³

The study group's next draft altered the wording to account for these discussions.

The reception of the groom and the bride may take place at the entrance of the church or, if it seems appropriate, in front of the altar.

²¹ Searle and Stevenson, *Documents of the Marriage Liturgy*, 149–55.

²² Schemata 157, p. 6, there as paragraph 13.

²³ Schemata 157 adnexum, p. 1.

Where circumstances suggest it, or if the episcopal conference will have determined it, the celebration of matrimony may begin at once with mass, the rite of reception having been omitted.

Concerning the appropriateness and place of some rite of reception, we kept in view the fruits of Rituals already in existence, the diversity of situations, and the observations proposed to us in the committee of relators. All these things considered, some rite of reception generally seems to be useful so that the climate of the celebration may truly be religious even from the beginning, and the very entrance of the couple into the church may become sacred. Nevertheless, according to pastoral circumstances or the judgment of the conference of bishops, it may end up more appropriate that the reception take place in front of the altar or be completely omitted.²⁴

Additional comments accompanied a subsequent draft. The study group continued to work out the best way to present its vision.

In the rite of reception itself, the celebrant may conduct a dialogue with the families or with the wedding party, teaching a profound sense both of the endowment and the covenant that the families contract between themselves. Then he may conduct a dialogue with the couple, anticipating, if the event calls for it, the questioning of those being married with its invitation, concerning which, see below in chapter III the numbers 26–27. In the arrangement of this rite, there may take place some symbolic giving and receiving of gifts; (it would be most desirable that some quantity of money also be brought forth to be divided among the poor;) if the event calls for it, the celebrant may bless the wedding garments that the bride (or even the groom) is wearing, and also the rings; that blessing would then be considered more of a preparatory rite.

Then all go up to the altar in procession.²⁵

To complement this vision, the same draft added a paragraph to the rubrics of the entrance procession.

²⁴ Schemata 182a, p. 6.

²⁵ Schemata 204, p. 3, there as paragraph 15; see also Schemata 221, pp. 8–9.

*Among those peoples where the escorted bride is solemnly led to be handed over to the groom, she may be received in the church with the group of all the escorts, as has been said above in the chapter on adaptations, n. 14.*²⁶

This rubric was one of the paragraphs that Seumois helped edit, given his experience with mission territories.²⁷ It refers back to paragraph 14 of the introduction of the same draft, which supplied the background.

Wherever, according to the legitimate customs of the people, the bride is solemnly led from the home of her parents to the home of the groom, this solemn ceremony may be arranged in a certain way with the very rite of the church, and put to use. Therefore, when all these things have correctly taken place in the home of the parents, the party of those escorting the bride go to the church, where, meeting the other party pertaining to the groom, both are received at the same time by the celebrant.²⁸

Bugnini summarized all this work in his reflections on the drafts:

The welcome is meant as a sensitive human gesture that will bring the couple, their relatives, and their friends into an atmosphere of spiritual fellowship.

The flexibility displayed in the rubric reflects the opposing views expressed during the discussions within the Consilium. There were those who saw the rite as possibly giving rise to discrimination: for the wealthy, reception at the door of the church, with a great deal of pomp and ceremony; for the poor, reception at the altar. Others disliked the idea of a procession through the church and other possible drawbacks. All agreed that room must be made for a rite of reception, precisely in order not to lose an opportunity of immediately placing the couple and the assembly in the atmosphere proper to a sacramental celebration.²⁹

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 4, there as paragraph 22.

²⁷ Gy, [Letter to the Consilium], *Schemata* 204, p. [i].

²⁸ *Schemata* 204, p. 3, there as paragraph 14.

²⁹ Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy, 1948–1975*, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 701–2.

In the final version of the ceremony, a bishop has another variation. He does not go to the door, but the parish priest (pastor) or another presbyter does. The priest is vested with cassock, surplice and stole, or alb and stole, unless he is celebrating or concelebrating the Mass. Then he wears the alb, stole, and chasuble. The priest receives the bride and groom at the door or in front of the altar. He leads them to their places. After the bishop reverences the altar, the priest presents the bride and groom to him.³⁰

Noble as all these thoughts are, few Catholic weddings begin with a greeting at the door. Perhaps the rubric pared the discussion too much and its intent was lost. But more likely the societal traditions behind the procession of the bride have been too powerful to overcome. In the planning room, the study group imagined that the priest would greet the wedding parties at the door, welcome them, and help establish a spiritual transition. In a strong secular tradition in the United States, however, the groom does not see the bride on the wedding day before they meet in the sanctuary. This tradition has become more and more artificial with the increase of cohabitation among couples, yet superstition has ruled over liturgy.

As will be seen in comments on OCM 46, the bride and the groom were meant to follow the priest to the altar, which provides another reason for the greeting at the door. They are the ministers of the sacrament of marriage, and their symbolic entrance behind the priest bears ritual significance. All this was implied in the rubrics, but they have gained little traction in practice.

The English translation says that the priest greets “the bridal party.” This expression appears only in this paragraph and its parallel in the wedding without Mass.³¹ It translates the Latin word *nupturientes*, which is translated elsewhere in the OCM as “the engaged couple.” The intent was for him to receive the bride and groom, not necessarily the entire bridal party. Here, the expression may be a concession to the practice that the engaged couple rarely stand at the door together before the wedding. The priest is more likely to find “the bridal party”: the bride and her bridesmaids, perhaps also the groomsmen. If the groom is not there, however,

³⁰ CB 602.

³¹ OCM 80.

the priest will not be able to greet him, thwarting the original intent of OCM 45.

The rubric says that the priest greets them “warmly.” This clause was added to the opening rubric in the penultimate draft, acknowledging the human elements of the priest’s greeting and the couple’s joy.³² “Warmly” translates the Latin word *humaniter*, which admonishes the priest to greet the couple “like a human being.” There seems to be some realization that often he does not. Weddings are stressful for everyone, even the priest. But at this moment, he should extend the warmth of the church as the couple enters matrimony. A similar concern appears in at least two other of the postconciliar liturgical books. In the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens from the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), the priest is to greet the candidates for the catechumenate *humaniter*.³³ And in the confessional he greets the penitent with *humanioribus verbis*.³⁴ In all these ways, the priest puts on the pleasant face of the church.

In Mexico, the priest may lead a sprinkling rite when he arrives at the door. This takes place even before the procession and the sign of the cross that begins the Mass. A precedent is found in the preconciliar Sunday Mass, when the priest could exorcise and bless water, and then sprinkle the altar, himself, the ministers, and the people—all before the Sunday Mass began.³⁵ At a wedding in Mexico, the priest may say in these or similar words, “Brothers and sisters, welcome to this celebration that fills us all with joy. Recalling our baptism, let us thank God for this gift of his love.” After a moment of silence, he leads the people in a threefold acclamation of praise to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for the gift of baptism. The people respond, “Blessed be God forever,” after each phrase. The priest signs himself with water and then sprinkles those present,

³² Schemata 221, p. 10.

³³ Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults 49, in *The Rites*, 54, translated there as “in a friendly manner.” Hereafter RCIA.

³⁴ Rite of Penance 41, in *The Rites*, 545, translated there as “with kindness.”

³⁵ *The Roman Ritual in Latin and English with Rubrics and Plainchant Notation: The Blessings*, vol. 3, trans. and ed. Philip T. Weller (Boonville, NY: Preserving Christian Publications, 2008), 12.

saying, “Sprinkle us, Lord, with the water of your mercy and purify us from all our sins.” Then to begin the procession to the altar, he says, “Let us go rejoicing to meet the Lord.” All answer, “Amen.” If there is no sprinkling, he greets the group at the door and then says, “Brothers and sisters, let us go rejoicing to meet the Lord.”³⁶ All then form the procession and enter the church.

The Mexican edition has three complete formularies for celebrating matrimony within Mass. Each of them presents one example of parts of the Mass where there are several options, such as the collect, the universal prayer, and the nuptial blessing. All the options are available at any time, but the editors sought and obtained the Vatican’s permission for three complete versions of the wedding within Mass for the first chapter of this liturgical book.

46.

The entrance chant takes place during the customary procession to the altar. With minor variations, this is the former paragraph 20. The words “Entrance Chant” are taken from the current translation of the Roman Missal.³⁷

The English translation redacted by the CDWDS surprisingly omits important details in the Latin. A fuller translation would say this:

The procession to the altar then takes place: the ministers go first, the priest follows, and then the engaged couple, who, according to local customs, may be honorably escorted at least by the parents and two witnesses to the place prepared for them. Meanwhile, the Entrance Chant takes place.

The CDWDS’s omission of this fuller description of the procession is hard to explain. Perhaps it was omitted because it means to describe a procession according to local customs. Even though the full rubric was in force between 1969 and 2016, it was rarely practiced. Perhaps the failure to adopt it in practice convinced the CDWDS that it was not the custom in English-speaking countries. The abridged

³⁶ *Ritual* (Mexico), 41–42.

³⁷ GIRM 121.

rubric appears in the editions of the OCM published in Australia, England and Wales, and in the United States of America.

The full rubric was preserved in French Canada³⁸ and in Mexico.³⁹ It also appears in Colombia⁴⁰ and, surprisingly, in the Spanish edition published by the USCCB.⁴¹ Thus the English and Spanish translations in force in the United States do not match at this paragraph.

Ideally, there is one procession up the aisle, led by a person carrying the cross, others with candles, the reader, the deacon, and the priest. The attendants come next, followed by the groom with his parents and the bride with hers. The couple will be exchanging mutual consent; they may anticipate this by entering equally in the procession. Another version would have the bride and groom coming last, arm in arm. All of these faithfully carry out the English translation of OCM 46. Unfortunately, so would a practice of having the priest enter last.

One small change opens this paragraph in Latin. The first edition began with the word "if." It combined the options of having or omitting the greeting at the door. Without a greeting at the door, it envisioned no procession to the altar. The second edition presumes that Mass will always begin with a procession.

This heightens the difficulty created by this paragraph's omission of the description of the procession. OCM 45 has already created the circumstance in which the priest goes to the door of the church to meet the bridal party. They all have to get to the sanctuary somehow. The sequence of participants in the procession is carefully crafted in Latin, but it remains a mystery to those who read it in English.

The Catholic Church has required the presence of two witnesses at least since the Council of Trent.⁴² In Hispanic and other

³⁸ *Rituel Romain*, 16.

³⁹ *Ritual* (Mexico), 42.

⁴⁰ *Ritual* (Colombia), 25.

⁴¹ *Ritual del Matrimonio* 46.

⁴² *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, ed. Henricus Denzinger and Adolfus Schönmetzer (Barcelona: Herder, 1973), 1813–16.

traditions, several couples serve as *padrinos* of the wedding, helping to pay for the expenses and performing ceremonial functions at different moments. Two of them, however, serve as canonical witnesses. Their participation in the procession is welcome. By custom, however, the wedding party often swells to a great number of friends of the bride and groom who join the procession as well. OCM 46 offers no upper limit to the number of people who may enter in procession.

The assembly is expected to sing an opening hymn during the procession. This happens more easily among Hispanics than among Anglos. Traditionally, throughout most of the United States and other countries instrumental music accompanies the entire procession, and the bride enters last. Traditionally, again, she enters to the accompaniment of a solo organist playing *Treulich geföhrt*, or the “Bridal Chorus,” from the beginning of Act III of Richard Wagner’s opera *Lohengrin*, which debuted in 1850. The opera’s wedding guests sing the chorus, but an instrumental version sounded at the wedding of the youngest child of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, Victoria the Princess Royal, to Prince Frederick Wilhelm of Prussia at the Chapel Royal, St. James Palace, in 1858. A custom was born.

Many Catholic dioceses and individual parishes ban the “Bridal Chorus” from weddings on the grounds of its secular origin or that the inseparable association of the tune with the English words “Here Comes the Bride” places too much attention on her. It could, however, be argued that Lohengrin’s character is a Knight of the Holy Grail, and he marries Elsa in a church, and that attention will be fixed on the bride no matter what music is played if she is last in the procession. Furthermore, organists frequently play other instrumental music from the Romantic era, making it hard to demonize one piece from an opera. Still, as OCM 30 has requested, all the music at the wedding should express the faith of the church.

The French Canadian edition added to OCM 46 a note that instrumental music may replace the entrance chant: “The organ or musical instruments may play a piece adapted to the rite and the church.”⁴³ The Mexican edition adds even more:

⁴³ *Rituel Romain*, 16.

Meanwhile, the entrance chant takes place or the organ or another instrument plays festively. The entrance chant or the music should express the faith of the Church and be appropriate to the rite of Matrimony. All should take care that this procession have a true liturgical character and avoid the appearance of any other thing.⁴⁴

The English editions do not make the same observation, though weddings in the United States typically begin with an instrumental. In fact, many wedding processions have two separate pieces of music, one reserved for the bride. But this is contrary to the nature of the music at the beginning of Mass and to the equality of the spouses as they enter and celebrate this ceremony.

OCM 46 is hoping people will sing. The rubric refers to the entrance antiphon of the Mass. According to OCM 34, there are occasions when the Mass for marriage yields to a Mass of importance on the liturgical calendar. In that case, the recommended antiphon comes from the Mass of that day, so a considerable variety of potential antiphons exists. When those days do not conflict, however, the wedding Mass offers its own antiphons from the Missal's Ritual Mass for the Celebration of Marriage.

There have long been other options. By the eleventh century, the Missal of Bury St. Edmunds permitted the Votive Mass for the Holy Trinity to replace Votive Mass for the Spouses.⁴⁵ The Mass of the Holy Trinity was ordinarily permitted only on Sundays, so the option of using it for weddings underscored the festive significance of these celebrations in the liturgical life of the parish. In the twelfth-century Roman Pontifical, the Votive Mass for the Holy Trinity opened with an antiphon that proclaimed, "Blessed be the Holy Trinity and undivided unity. Praise him because he has granted his mercy to us."⁴⁶ The 1570 Missal retained that antiphon and cites Tobit 12:6 as its source. (The same verse in the new Vulgate has a few differences, though the key phrases for this

⁴⁴ *Ritual* (Mexico), 42.

⁴⁵ Stevenson, *To Join Together*, 42.

⁴⁶ *Le Pontifical Romain au moyen-âge, Tome I: Le Pontifical Romain du XII^e siècle*, ed. Michel Andrieu, Studi e Testi 86 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana 1938), 301. Hereafter, *Le Pontifical Romain*.

antiphon are not much affected.)⁴⁷ The antiphon's first phrase honoring the Trinity obviously postdates any Old Testament book and expands the simple word for "God" from the verse in the Vulgate. The antiphon is joined to Psalm 8:2, praising how wonderful is God's name through all the earth.⁴⁸ The antiphon endured in the Missal up to the Second Vatican Council. The postconciliar Missal further expanded the address to the divinity from "the Trinity" to "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," and retained the final phrase, "for he has shown us his merciful love." The citation to Tobit has been removed, but this antiphon derives from the same passage in the Vulgate, Tobit 12:6.

According to the Missal of Bury St. Edmunds, the wedding began at the door of the church with the arrival of the parties and the giving of the ring. As the procession entered the church, Psalm 128 (127) was sung,⁴⁹ a psalm hailing the blessings of family life. It contributed to the early repertoire of wedding music.

The entrance antiphon in the pre-Vatican II Votive Mass for Spouses varied over the centuries. The tenth-century Roman-Germanic Pontifical used Psalm 90 (89).⁵⁰ The Roman Pontifical of the twelfth century inserted an entrance antiphon from Tobit 7:15 and 8:19 (which have no equivalents in the new Vulgate). These combine Raguel's prayerful address to Tobiah and Sarah and his household's thanks to God.⁵¹

From among the options of these pontificals, the 1570 Missal's Mass for Spouses chose the entrance antiphon from the twelfth century.⁵² Perhaps this verse held some allure to the post-Tridentine church because it upheld verses from Tobit, a book that the Reform-

⁴⁷ *Nova Vulgata Bibliorum Sacrorum editio* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1979).

⁴⁸ *Missale Romanum*, p. [49].

⁴⁹ Searle and Stevenson, *Documents of the Marriage Liturgy*, 151.

⁵⁰ *Le Pontifical romano-germanique du dixième siècle: Le texte avec utilisation des collations laissées par M. Andrieu*, ed. Cyrille Vogel and Reinhard Elze, *Studi e testi* 226, 227, 269 (Vatican City: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1963–1972), vol. 2, 415. Hereafter PRG.

⁵¹ *Le Pontifical Romain*, 260.

⁵² *Missale Romanum*, p. [75].

ers had claimed was noncanonical. Or perhaps they chose it because it was the more recent option.

The post-Vatican II Roman Missal recommends three entrance chants. The first is based on Psalm 20 (19):3, 5. In context, the people are singing to the couple: "May the Lord send you help. . . . May he grant you your hearts' desire."⁵³ The second is based on Psalm 90 (89):14, 17. This one seems to express the sentiments of the couple: "[F]ill us with your merciful love. . . . Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us."⁵⁴ The third is based on Psalm 145 (144):2, 9. It expresses the potential prayer of anyone present, even the bride or groom: "I will bless you day after day, O Lord . . . for you are kind to all."⁵⁵

As often happens, the *Ordo cantus missæ* offers a different selection.⁵⁶ Like the lectionary, the *Ordo cantus missæ* is part of the Roman Missal, though published as a separate volume. First printed in 1970, it contains a wider selection of texts for antiphons and responsories than those appearing in the Missal. Musical accompaniment is found in the *Graduale Romanum*,⁵⁷ in which the monks of the Abbey of St. Peter in Solesmes, France, preserve the chant tradition of the Catholic Church. There is no official English translation of the *Ordo cantus missæ*, but its suggestions for the antiphons at Mass deserve consideration as part of the original vision of the complete post-Vatican II Missal.

The first suggestion from the *Ordo cantus missæ* is Psalm 68 (67):6, 7, 36, and 2. The psalm praises God, who lives in his holy place yet gives people a home where they can dwell in one heart. The second option is Psalm 90 (89):1, 2. It acclaims God as a refuge

⁵³ Roman Missal, Marriage A.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, B.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, C.

⁵⁶ *Ordo cantus missæ, editio typica altera* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1987), 354.

⁵⁷ *Graduale sacrosanctæ Romanæ ecclesiæ de tempore et de Sanctis primum Sancti Pii X iussu restitutum et editum Pauli VI Pontificis Maximi cura nunc recognitum ad exemplar "Ordinis cantus missæ" dispositum et rhythmicis signis a Solesmensibus monachis diligenter ornatum* (Solesmes: Abbatia Sancti Petri de Solesmis, 1974). Hereafter, *Graduale Romanum*.

from one generation to the next. This is the same antiphon cited above in the Roman-Germanic Pontifical. The final option is Psalm 34 (33):10, 11, and 2. It offers the consoling message that those who seek the Lord lack no good. All these antiphons shine with the hopeful joy that this couple will become a family blessed by God.

The Vatican published a simpler version of chants to accompany the Missal even earlier, in 1967.⁵⁸ There is found yet another antiphon for the Mass for spouses.⁵⁹ The *Graduale simplex* offers Psalm 37 (36): 1-9 (2-10), paired with an uncredited slightly altered citation of John 2:1, the opening verse of the gospel's account of the wedding at Cana. The psalm sings the benefits of those who trust in the Lord. The study group preparing the postconciliar wedding ceremony imagined that the *Graduale simplex* would supply the necessary words for the antiphons at a wedding Mass.⁶⁰

According to the GIRM, a completely different song may replace the entrance antiphon.⁶¹ At a wedding Mass, if none of the entrance antiphons from the Missal are used, another antiphon or hymn replaces them. Either way, the OCM hopes that the congregation will sing a hymn of faith as the wedding gets underway.

Nonetheless, at any Mass, the GIRM also permits having the entrance chant recited. All the faithful, some of them, or a reader may recite one of the antiphons assigned for the wedding.⁶² It would be odd to recite an antiphon during a wedding procession, but the rubrics permit it.

If a participation aid has been prepared for the people, it would be appropriate to put it in the hands of the groom and bride as well. All members of the wedding party may need copies of music that they are expected to sing.

Perhaps the study group was just naive, but even after the council, the traditional societal wedding procession, featuring the entrance of the bride to an instrumental solo, overpowered not only

⁵⁸ *Graduale simplex in usum minorum ecclesiarum, editio typica altera* (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis 1975).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 379.

⁶⁰ Schemata 248, p. 16.

⁶¹ GIRM 48.

⁶² GIRM 48, 198.

the greeting between the priest and the couple at the door but also the processional hymn sung by all the people as should happen at any Mass. To realize their vision in parishes will require considerable courage.

The Mexican edition inserts two paragraphs at this point of the ritual.

With respect to the place prepared for the couple, it is appropriate to keep in mind, if possible, that they be seated in such a way that they do not turn their backs to the assembly.

When the couple arrive at the place prepared for them, if it is fitting, the parents may give them the blessing before going to their places.⁶³

This honors a tradition in some places in Latin America where each of their children kneels, and the parents make the sign of the cross over them. Such a gesture is reserved to clergy in the liturgical books, but its usage by parents remains strong in some cultures.

47.

The priest approaches, bows to, and kisses the altar. Then he goes to his chair.

This paragraph is new to the second edition of the OCM, but it simply fills a gap. It should be understood that at any Mass, the priest makes his entrance in this way. The source for this is the Roman Missal.⁶⁴ If a deacon assists, he also bows and kisses the altar.⁶⁵ The revised English translation matches the pertinent vocabulary in the Missal.

This paragraph does not indicate the appropriate reverence when the tabernacle is in the sanctuary. In that case, the ministers genuflect to the tabernacle before reverencing the altar.⁶⁶

⁶³ *Ritual* (Mexico), pp. 42–43.

⁶⁴ GIRM 49; OM 1.

⁶⁵ GIRM 49.

⁶⁶ GIRM 274.

The Second Form

The second form for the beginning of the Mass supplies the option of the priest not greeting the couple at the door.

48.

The priest, vested for Mass, goes with the servers to the place where the couple will be or to his chair.

This repeats most of the material from OCM 45. The priest goes not to the door but to the place prepared for the couple. Traditionally, this is in the sanctuary, but the OCM never specifies where. It does not mention kneelers, even though these are often provided. If so, chairs for the couple would also be required. In some ethnic traditions this is quite common; in others, not. But the couple will need to assume all the postures that the rest of the assembly takes during Mass, including sitting. Whatever furniture is provided, it delineates “the place prepared for the couple.”

Or the priest may simply go to his chair, but he will soon have to leave it, according to OCM 49 and 50. Perhaps this is why the Mexican edition has removed the option of going to the chair.⁶⁷ Paragraph 19 of the first edition allowed the priest to go to the altar instead of the door, but the second edition more appropriately replaces “altar” with “chair.” He does not go to the altar until OCM 50. For the sake of clarity, the second edition sets apart the alternatives of going to the door or going to the chair.

49.

The priest receives and greets the couple when they arrive at their place. This is also taken from OCM 45, adjusted for the circumstance in which the priest did not greet the couple at the door.

If the priest has gone to his chair, he apparently leaves there to approach the couple. If he is at the place prepared for the couple, he simply remains. Traditionally, the couple occupy places within the sanctuary, but this is never explicitly stated. As ministers of the sacrament of marriage, they have a place in the sanctuary. They

⁶⁷ *Ritual* (Mexico), 43.

could, however, sit outside the sanctuary in the nave, and in some countries, they do.

OCM 49 is totally silent about the procession of the wedding party in this second form. Even in Latin there is no description of the order of procession, as the English translation omits in OCM 46. Somehow, the wedding party have to get to the place prepared for them. This silence creates a space for the traditional wedding procession.

Often the sanctuary is furnished with places for the bride and groom, possibly for the two main witnesses, and possibly for the others in the wedding party. Or pews have been reserved for these attendants.

In one common tradition, the groom and groomsmen gather in a side sacristy before Mass. At the appointed time, they take a position in front of the pews and look down the aisle toward the door. The priest enters with servers from another sacristy, he reverences the altar, and takes his position at his chair or the place reserved for the couple. Then the bridesmaids process up the center aisle. Groomsmen step forward one by one to escort them along the final steps toward their places.

Traditionally, the bride enters last, escorted by her father. At the edge of the sanctuary, he may kiss her and give her hand to the groom. Although this ancient gesture is absent from the OCM, an important vestige and reinterpretation remains at paragraph 62. The groom escorts the bride to their places.

There are many variations on the procession. Sometimes the groom stands alone in front of the pews and all the attendants walk down the aisle as couples. This has the positive effect of drawing more people into the procession, but it makes it appear that all the attendants are really at church for the bride. Alternatively, the groom may enter the procession after the priest, escorted by both of his parents, and the bride escorted by both of hers.

The OCM makes no mention of a ring bearer or a flower girl, yet children traditionally take these roles. Justification can be sought from the final words of OCM 29, which permit the preservation of local customs.

The second form surrenders hope of the unified procession one normally expects at the start of Mass. Modern culture—and even

the liturgy—stresses the equality of the married partners. Yet the traditional procession keeps alive in the culture the antiquated view that the bride is property passed from her father to another male. How richer was the original vision of the study group, where the couple arrive together at the door, the priest greets them and helps them enter the church reverently. As ministers of the sacrament, they follow the priest to the sanctuary.

But once again, the power of the traditional procession has brought the rubrics of the Roman Rite to silence.

50.

The priest reverences the altar during the entrance chant and then goes to his chair.

In this version the entrance chant follows the moment when the priest greets the couple. It almost appears that there is no procession at all. People have arrived informally, and now the wedding is getting underway. The priest chats with the couple, and then the music begins—music that may open any Mass. With that the priest goes to the altar and then to his chair.

Most of this is copied from OCM 47, adjusted for the circumstances of the second form. The Mexican edition again explicitly allows instrumental music for the procession.⁶⁸

51.

The priest makes the sign of the cross and greets the people. This paragraph is new to the second edition but clarifies what should have been understood. Any Mass begins with the sign of the cross and a greeting.⁶⁹

The typical edition in Latin did not include the words of the alternative greetings here, but they have been inserted from the Missal into the OCM for England and Wales, though not in Australia. The Spanish language version for the United States and the Mexican edition⁷⁰ imitate the Latin—no greetings are provided in this book. The greetings appear in the French Canadian edition,

⁶⁸ *Ritual* (Mexico), 43.

⁶⁹ GIRM 50; OM 1, 2.

⁷⁰ *Ritual* (Mexico), 43.

including two that call for the people to respond, “Blessed be God now and forever.”⁷¹

If instrumental music accompanied the procession and there has been no singing of the entrance chant or an opening hymn, the words of the chant need to be accounted for. As indicated above, all the faithful, some of them, the reader, or the priest may do this. It may be done before the sign of the cross or within the introductory comments in the following two paragraphs.⁷²

52.

The priest invites everyone to dispose themselves inwardly for the celebration. This paragraph and the following one offer two samples of his introduction, this one addressed to the people, the second to the couple. The priest may use other words.

At any Mass, words of introduction may be freely composed, and a priest, deacon, or another minister may deliver them.⁷³ Here, the priest is explicitly charged with this duty.

Both these paragraphs are new to the second edition but, even earlier, members of the preparatory commission for the Second Vatican Council wanted “a certain introduction to the rite, making the engaged couple aware of the importance and value of the sacramental consent that they are about to give.”⁷⁴ Its addition to the second edition springs from the same desire that led the first edition to introduce the greeting at the door. Both seek ways to help the couple appreciate the religious nature of the ceremony from its beginning.

The first of the proposed introductions establishes a happy tone and invites the entire assembly to support the couple, listen to the Word with them, and pray humbly for God’s blessing of them. The opening lines are inspired by verses of the pilgrimage song, Psalm 122 (121)—standing with the couple, who come to the home of the Lord on the day that they inaugurate a home of their own. If the priest chooses to compose or improvise his own words, these give him an idea about how to proceed.

⁷¹ *Rituel Romain*, 17.

⁷² GIRM 48, 198.

⁷³ GIRM 31; OM 3.

⁷⁴ Schemata 32, pp. 14–15.

The Mexican translation offers three additional alternatives, including one for second marriages that may include an acknowledgment of children: "God will welcome also the prayer of your child (children), fruit of your earlier marriage, and will help everyone to form a new home enlivened by love, which is the bond of perfect unity."⁷⁵

53.

Or the priest addresses the couple, announcing both the spirit of joy and the meaning of the celebration. The expression "partnership of the whole of life" comes from canon law's definition of marriage.⁷⁶ This introduction concludes with words inspired by the opening verses of Psalm 20 (19), originally a prayer for God's favor before battle, used here only in the sense of God's favor. The same verses inspired one of the entrance antiphons presumed in OCM 46.

If the entrance chant has not been sung or recited before the sign of the cross in OCM 51, then the priest may adapt it into his introduction for the Mass.⁷⁷ This second option may have been written as a demonstration.

Nowhere in the introduction is there a provision for the priest to ask a question such as, "Who gives this woman to be married to this man?" Nor does the bride's father answer to such a question, "I do." The question has never been part of the Catholic wedding ceremony, but the traditional wedding procession in which the father walks his daughter down the aisle essentially puts the question into ritual form. More important than having the father put his daughter's hand into the hand of the groom is the joining of the couple's hands in OCM 62.

The penitential act is omitted. The Roman Missal observes the same point. No mention is made of the Kyrie. In a Mass for the First Sunday of Lent that includes a procession, on Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, and at an extended Pentecost Vigil, the Missal omits the penitential act and, "if appropriate, the Kyrie," thus mak-

⁷⁵ *Ritual* (Mexico), 217.

⁷⁶ Canon 1055 §1.

⁷⁷ GIRM 48.

ing a distinction between the two units. Presumably, the absence of the delimiting phrase “if appropriate” in the OCM signifies that the Kyrie is omitted at a wedding along with the penitential act.

During the Ritual Mass for the Celebration of Marriage, the Gloria is said or sung.⁷⁸ This was true of the preconconciliar Mass as well.⁷⁹ The translation used in Colombia says that the Gloria is sung “when prescribed.”⁸⁰ At first this seems like a deviation from the Missal but perhaps is closer to the truth. The Gloria is prescribed for the Ritual Mass for the Celebration of Marriage, but there are occasions when OCM 34 calls for another Mass to be said. If a wedding takes place during a Saturday night Mass during Advent or Lent, for example, the Gloria would be omitted. If, however, the wedding takes place earlier on Saturday afternoon during those seasons, the ritual Mass is said together with its Gloria. The Mexican edition surprisingly restricts this by removing the Gloria completely during Advent and Lent.⁸¹ (A Mexican community will surely sing a Gloria during its celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe, which falls during Advent. The same song could enliven a Saturday morning wedding Mass during Advent, but in Mexico it does not.) Both the French Canadian translation and the book published for England and Wales include the text of the Gloria here, making it easier for the presider to use the book. The OCM of England and Wales even includes chant notation for the sung version from the Missal.

54.

When permitted, the Ritual Mass for the Celebration of Marriage is used; otherwise it is the Mass of the day.

These paragraphs repeat information contained in the introduction, OCM 34, and at the heading of the Missal’s ritual Mass. They appear here in the OCM for the first time. It is important for the priest to know which Mass to say, which will have an impact on his presidential prayers, as well as the readings to be proclaimed.

⁷⁸ Roman Missal, Marriage.

⁷⁹ *Missale Romanum*, p. [75].

⁸⁰ *Ritual* (Colombia), 27.

⁸¹ *Ritual* (Mexico), 44.