

# The Order of Celebrating Matrimony

## Questions & Answers

Starting September 8, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the dioceses of the United States may begin using the new ritual book for wedding liturgies, titled “The Order of Celebrating Matrimony.” It becomes mandatory on December 30, the Feast of the Holy Family.

Below, are some frequently asked questions about the new rite. This list will be updated as new questions are submitted. Questions may be submitted by [clicking here](#).

Additional questions and answers can be found here: [Committee on Divine Worship Newsletter, August 2016](#).

**Q. What are the appropriate and non-appropriate customs in the new OCM?**

**A. Appropriate Customs that are already included in the rite are:**

1. Arras
2. Lazo
3. Veil

The following local customs are considered to be Appropriate Customs in the DOSA at the discretion of the pastor. If there is a question about something that is not on this list, please consult the Bishop’s Office.

1. The use of Sponsors or Padrinos to present customary items.
2. Unity Candle
  - Side candles should not be extinguished.
  - Baptismal candles of the bride and groom may be used.
  - May not be placed on the altar.
  - Side candles are lit prior to the liturgy.
  - Center candle is lit by the bride and groom from the side candles during the hymn at OCM 68.
3. Cushions
  - Put in place before the ceremony.
4. Bible
  - May be presented after OCM 67B and before the hymn at OCM 68
  - There is no official ritual prayer, but the presider may express its meaning when presenting it.
5. Rosary
  - May be presented after OCM 67B and before the hymn at OCM 68
  - There is no official ritual prayer, but the presider may express its meaning when presenting it.
6. Flowers to Mary
  - May be presented after the post-Communion prayer.
  - Usually accompanied by music.
7. Flowers to the Mothers
  - May be presented at any time deemed appropriate by the presider.

8. Presentation of the Couple and the Couple Kissing
  - Do not use the expression, “I now pronounce you man and wife.”

The following customs are considered to be **Non-Appropriate Customs** for a Wedding Liturgy in the DOSA:

1. Mixing of Sand
2. Jumping the Broom
3. Use of Animals or Birds
4. Use of signs in the Processional or Recessional (Here Comes the Bride, There They Go, etc.)

The following practices are **discouraged** for reasons of safety:

1. Rice
2. Bubbles
3. Runners
4. Flower Petals in the Procession

**Q. When should the Lazo be placed over the couple?**

A. The “Blessing and Placing of the Lazo or Veil (OCM 71B) may be done after the Our Father (OCM 72) or according to local custom, after OCM 67B. An acceptable order of these customs would be as follows:

- Arras
- Bible
- Rosary
- Unity Candle (accompanied by hymn at OCM 68)
- Lazo

**Q. Can the Rite of Matrimony be celebrated at Easter Vigil?**

A. The Rite of Matrimony, whether a convalidation or not, should not be celebrated at the Easter Vigil.

**Q. Can we have a wedding without Music?**

A. When there is no music in a Mass, the proper Entrance Antiphons from *The Roman Missal*: Ritual Mass for the Celebration of Marriage may be used as the Entrance Chant. The Ordinary parts of the Mass, such as the Gloria, would be recited. The Alleluia would be omitted if it is not sung.

**Q. OCM 23 states, “It is appropriate that the same Priest who prepares the engaged couple should, during the celebrations of the Sacrament itself, give the Homily, receive the spouses’ consent, and celebrate the Mass”. Does this mean that another Priest cannot witness the marriage?**

A. A pastor may give delegation to another Priest or Deacon to witness the marriage. If the Priest or Deacon is from outside the DOSA, a Letter of Suitability from their Bishop or Superior is required. The letter must be sent from their Bishop or Superior directly to the DOSA Bishop.

**Q. Can a pastor preside at the Mass but allow a visiting priest to celebrate the Rite of Marriage?**

A. The pastor, without requiring the Bishop's permission, may delegate another priest to receive the consent of the couple. In this case, the priest who receives the consent would be the priest who would sign the marriage license and the marriage register. According to OCM 23, it is recommended that the same priest who celebrates the Mass, give the homily, and receive the couple's consent.

**Q. Can a Deacon celebrate the Rite of Marriage in a Mass?**

A. In the OCM within Mass, it is not the role of the Deacon to celebrate the Rite of Marriage. On rare, extraordinary circumstances, this may be allowed with the explicit written permission of the local Bishop.

**Q. When a Deacon presides at a wedding outside of Mass, is a Dalmatic required or is it optional?**

A. It is optional.

**Q. When a Priest presides at a wedding outside of Mass, is a Cope required or is it optional?**

A. It is optional.

**Q. When a Priest or Deacon is presiding at a wedding outside of Mass, can Communion be distributed?**

A. Although not forbidden, it is not the usual practice. OCM 108 describes how Holy Communion is to be distributed in these circumstances.

**Q. Where is "the place" of the couple?**

A. There are many options: in front of the altar, at the steps into the sanctuary, or in the first pew of the church. Depending on the layout of the church, it is allowed to place two kneelers in the sanctuary.

**Q. When using "The Order of Blessing a Married Couple Within Mass on the Anniversary of Marriage," is it allowed to use the readings and orations of the day instead of those found in the OCM?**

A. It is preferable to use the readings and orations from the OCM; however, on solemnities or Sundays, the orations and readings of the day may be used in the DOSA.

**Q. Is it necessary to have a Cantor in the Celebration of Marriage Within a Mass or in the Celebration of Marriage Without a Mass?**

A. While a cantor is recommended for all weddings, there are some cases when it is not possible to have one. It is recommended that if a cantor is used, he or she should be a trained cantor who is familiar with Catholic liturgy.

**Q. Are there certain days in the liturgical calendar when wedding Masses are not permitted?**

A. Weddings are to be avoided altogether on Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

"Whenever Marriage is celebrated within Mass, the Ritual Mass "The Celebration of Marriage" is used with sacred vestments of the color white or of a festive color. On those days listed in nos. 1-4 of the

Table of Liturgical Days, however, the Mass of the day is used with its own readings, with inclusion of the Nuptial Blessing and, if appropriate, the proper formula for the final blessing.

If, however, during Christmas and Ordinary Time, the parish community participates in a Sunday Mass during which Marriage is celebrated, the Mass of the Sunday is used.

Nevertheless, since a Liturgy of the Word adapted for the celebration of Marriage has a great impact in the handing on of catechesis about the Sacrament itself and about the duties of the spouses, when the Mass “For the Celebration of Marriage” is not said, one of the readings may be taken from the texts provided for the celebration of Marriage (nos. 144-187).” (OCM 34)

Please refer to the following documents for further clarification:

“Table of Liturgical Days According to Their Order of Precedence”

“A Chronological List of the Days on which a Ritual Mass may not be used”