

Preparing for your Wedding and your Wedded Life Together



Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Church
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WEDDING DATE: _____

TIME: _____

CLERGY CONTACT: _____

PREFACE

Congratulations! You have accepted God's call to Marriage. This is one of the greatest decisions you will ever make. Your engagement is a special time in your life, a time when you talk about everything. It is also a time when you have to make plans for the future. You have chosen correctly to make your love holy in a sacred ceremony. We rejoice in your decision and wish you God's every blessing. We at Seton want to make your engagement as carefree as possible.

This booklet has been developed to help you prepare for your marriage. Since marriage is so important to both the Church and to society, it is governed by certain laws. Some of these are contained in this guide. Be sure to read it carefully and check it frequently.

YOUR READINESS FOR MARRIAGE

Our Catholic Church gives the priest and deacon a serious responsibility. Since no two couples are the same, the parish clergy have the delicate job of helping you discern your readiness for marriage. During your engagement, the priest or deacon will speak with you about your freedom to marry based on the requirements of Church law; your psychological stability and maturity; the depth of your commitment to each other; your understanding of Catholic teaching about permanence, mutual fidelity and openness to children in marriage. Because marriage is a "partnership for the whole of life," the process of making sure you are both ready for marriage is your most important obligation to one another. It is also our most valuable service to you.

I. CHURCH LAW

A. SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

For Catholics, marriage is a covenant by which man and woman make of their very lives a partnership for the whole of life. It has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament for two baptized persons. It takes time to understand *covenant, partnership* and *sacrament*. Before you run out to hire the band, here are some suggestions:

The Eucharist is the most important of all the sacraments. Therefore, **it is expected that couples seeking to be married in the Catholic Church be regular Sunday Mass participants.**

To receive the Sacrament of Matrimony worthily, one must be in the *state of grace*. It is most important, therefore, that **couples make frequent use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance or Confession) before marriage.**

Prayer is the everyday experience of the Lord's presence in our lives. Through prayer, we praise and thank our God; we seek His help and strength, and we hear His message of love and concern for us. **Prayer should be part of the shared life of couples who are married, and those who are preparing to be married.** Learn to pray together. Come to church and receive Holy Communion together during your engagement. The Lord desires to bless and nourish engaged couples. Open up to Him!

On the day of marriage, some couples wish to celebrate their wedding in the context of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The priests of Seton are happy to celebrate a Nuptial Mass provided that the parties getting married are both *practicing* Catholics. In other circumstances a Marriage Ceremony will be celebrated.

B. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

1. Catholics must produce *new* records (not photocopies of originals) of baptism (issued no more than *six months* before the wedding date). Non-Catholic Christians must provide proof of valid baptism by certificate or testimonial letters.

2. Certificates of Catholic Confirmation and First Communion are to be obtained from the parishes in which these sacraments were administered.

3. "Letters of Freedom to Marry" are needed for anyone who is *not* a Catholic. These are the sworn declarations of two persons well known to the non-Catholic party, preferably parents or close relatives. The following text is to be used: "I, _____ (*full name*), hereby declare that _____ (*name of the non-Catholic party*), my _____ (*declaration of relationship*) has never been married to the best of my knowledge, and I do not know of any reason why he/she should not be married at this time." This letter is to be signed and *notarized*.

4. If *neither* of the parties is *currently* a registered member of Seton Parish, a "Letter of Permission" is needed from both of the Catholic pastor(s) granting permission for the wedding to take place at Seton.

5. A notarized "Letter of Permission" is to be written by your parents or legal guardian if either of you are under the age of 21.

6. If one of the contracting parties has been married before, either in the Catholic Church, by any other religious group or before a civil magistrate, the "Death Certificate" of the former spouse or a "Declaration of Nullity" from the Church must be produced. This applies to the non-Catholic parties as well. **This certificate or declaration must be produced before a wedding date can be set.** When filing for a procedural "Declaration of Nullity" from the Archdiocesan Marriage Tribunal, it is customary to make an offering of \$75.00 to offset the secretarial costs. In other cases, a full annulment proceeding may be necessary.

7. A marriage of Mixed Religion (involving a non-Baptized person) may be celebrated with the imparting of the Nuptial Blessing once the proper permissions have been obtained from the Chancery Office. It is customary to make an offering of \$75.00 to offset the secretarial costs for this dispensation.

II. POLICIES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

A. MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAM

Visit the Family Life Office website at www.nyfamilylife.org. As part of an adequate preparation for marriage, it is expected that both parties attend one of the *Pre-Cana* programs together. They are special workshops in communication, sexuality, conflict resolution, parenting, finances, and marriage readiness. Experienced married couples, psychologists and clergy lead these sessions. You may choose whichever program is best suited to your needs.

B. PREMARITAL INVENTORIES

These online instruments help couples discover their relationship strengths and weaknesses. They are available at www.nyfamilylife.org. Your priest or deacon will help you with this.

C. NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

With its doctrines rooted in the Sacred Scriptures, the Church has taught from the beginning regarding the responsibility of spouses in remaining open to the gift of children. Your priest or deacon will ask you to participate in a *Natural Family Planning Course*, held at various locations throughout the Archdiocese of New York. This course usually requires a series of sessions on different days/evenings, and is usually offered in Catholic medical centers and select parishes. Visit www.nyfamilylife.org. Countless couples who use *NFP* have found it to be a wonderful enrichment for their marriage.

D. PRE-MATRIMONIAL INVESTIGATION

After proper instruction on the Sacrament of Marriage has been completed, each couple will answer the *PMI Questionnaire* conducted by the priest or deacon who is arranging your wedding. This is to be signed and kept as a permanent record in the Parish Office.

E. THE PLACE OF YOUR WEDDING

1. The proper place for a Catholic wedding is the *parish church*. No other place has as much sacred meaning and importance for the spiritual life of the parishioners.

2. A Catholic couple may not be married out-of-doors or in restaurants, hotels or country clubs. The sacraments may only be celebrated in a sacred place.

3. Permission may be sought for marriage in a college chapel if one of the parties is a student, alumnus, or faculty member of the college.

4. If one party is a non-Catholic, permission may be granted, if a sufficient reason exists, for the marriage to take place in another house of worship or according to the rite of the non-Catholic religion. This request is made to the Archbishop directly. Your priest or deacon will help you to make this request.

5. In the case of Catholic-Jewish weddings, special permission may be sought from the Archbishop for the wedding to be celebrated in another suitable place. Your priest or deacon will help you with this request.

III. NEW YORK STATE REQUIREMENTS

Marriage, besides being a covenant of Church law, is also a civil contract, and so is subject to civil law. The state will issue a license for each marriage performed. A marriage license may be obtained at regional government offices in New York State, for example, town halls in Westchester County. It is valid 24 hours after it is issued, and then for 60 days thereafter. Both of you must be present in order to apply for a license. Be sure to call before you go to obtain information regarding the particulars involved (e.g., applicable fees, methods of payments, acceptable forms of identification and other requirements). Please bring the license to the wedding rehearsal so that it can be prepared for the requisite signatures. **Please note that the wedding cannot occur without a valid Marriage License.**

IV. MARRIAGE AT SETON

A. ELIGIBILITY

One of the first questions to be asked is, "Are you a parishioner?" Church law allows pastors and his delegates to officiate at marriages when either the bride or groom is one of his own parishioners. You are a parishioner if you are a baptized Catholic and you live within the parish boundaries, or if you have been a registered and participating member of the parish for at least six months, or if your parents are registered members of the parish and you live with them. **Former residence in a parish does not make you a current member of the parish.** If neither the bride nor the groom is a parishioner, you'll have to speak with the parish priest or deacon about necessary permissions.

B. ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE CHURCH

You need to set the date for your wedding. **Before you make arrangements for a place to hold your reception, you must first meet with one of the clergy of Seton.** When you initially meet with the priest or deacon, you most probably will be able to set a date and time to be married. At this initial interview you will be asked questions to determine your readiness for marriage (e.g., How old are you?; Have you ever been married before?; or Where do you live?). **We usually need at least six months to help you prepare for your wedding.** Wedding dates will *not* be set over the phone.

C. TIMES FOR WEDDINGS

Fridays, except 1st Fridays, 4:00pm-7:00pm

Saturdays, 1:00pm **or** 3:00pm
(4th Saturday-AFTER 2:00pm)

1st, 2nd, and 3rd Sunday, after 4:00pm
4th & 5th Sunday, after 2:30pm

All times are subject to the parish schedule on a given day. We reserve them on a first come basis. Nuptial Masses offered on Saturday before 4:00 PM do not have the character of the anticipated Liturgy of Sunday. **Those attending a Nuptial Mass on Saturday before 4:00 PM or a wedding ceremony on Sunday do not fulfill their Sunday obligation.** Weddings on the Fridays of Lent are strongly discouraged, due to the penitential character of the day. Those who have a reception on a Friday of Lent *must* seek a dispensation if meat is to be consumed at the reception.

D. PUNCTUALITY Since the priest or deacon conducting the rehearsal and wedding will likely have other duties on the same day, **appointments for rehearsals and weddings must be kept on time.** Lateness is not fashionable, causes serious inconvenience, and is rude. Please be on time. **Whatever time is booked, only one hour is allotted to complete the service.** Also, the musicians may have other commitments after your service, and must leave after the hour.

PLEASE NOTE:

Late starts to the wedding liturgy will result in a significant shortening of, or change to, the Rite. Excessive lateness may result in cancellation.

E. OFFICIANT Weddings are witnessed by one of the parish priests or deacons. However, when the family has a relative or close friend who is a Catholic clergyman and would like him to officiate at the wedding, he must seek permission at least three months in advance. Kindly advise him to *write* his willingness to the pastor so that proper delegation may be granted. Guest priests and deacons are responsible for respecting the method of celebration used at Seton.

F. REHEARSALS The date and time for rehearsal will be set by you and the celebrant. **The wedding party and any readers at the ceremony should be at the rehearsal on time.** Because we want to shield the couple from any embarrassing experiences, we do not encourage you to invite preschoolers to be part of the wedding party, since the behavior of children is so unpredictable. The Marriage License is to be brought at this time. The church offering and musicians fees are also brought to the rehearsal.

G. FLOWERS If there is more than one wedding on a given day, it might be possible to share the cost of flowers with another wedding party. The architectural character of our church suggests simplicity in the decorations. Two arrangements for the sanctuary are usually sufficient. **Please inform your florist that adhesive tape, tacks or putty should not be used to affix decorations to the pews (it removes the finish). Elastic bands are permitted.** No arches of flowers are permitted in the sanctuary as they block the view of the altar. The use of flower petals to be thrown on Church property is *prohibited*.

H. RUNNERS Runners are permitted but not encouraged. If you are using a runner, the length should be 39 feet.

I. PHOTOGRAPHERS Pictures of the wedding are a wonderful keepsake; however, **the photographers must consult with the celebrant before the ceremony for instruction.** Good taste and reverence for the church should be part of the wedding ceremony. **During Nuptial Masses, pictures are not allowed from the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer to the conclusion of the Communion Rite.** The use of floodlights is prohibited by the Fire Department. Please inform your video photographer of this. **Because the church is a sacred place and not a studio, photographs may not be taken after the ceremony within the church without specific permission of the pastor. Photos may be taken outside the church provided that it does not interfere with other services being held at the church.**

J. WEDDING SACRISTAN A trained parishioner will prepare the church for the wedding, assist you before and after the Mass/ceremony and take care of cleaning the church when you depart. The wedding sacristan should be given a tip of \$25.

K. REVERENCE Remember that the Church is the House of the Lord, and that the Blessed Sacrament is present in the Tabernacle. **During the rehearsal and wedding, proper and reverential behavior is expected at all times. Gum chewing and loud talking are disrespectful in Church. Drinking of alcohol is inappropriate anywhere on church property. This includes a champagne toast *outside* the limousine and *in front* of the church.**

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L. OFFERING Wedding Fee: \$500. The Church does not charge for the Sacraments. However, elaborate wedding ceremonials cost the parish time and money. The following offering should be brought to the wedding rehearsal in the form of a check or money order made out to "ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON CHURCH." *This offering is made to the church to defray the costs to the parish of staff, lighting, air conditioning, heat, etc . . . The Music Director will bill you directly for the Wedding Music as contracted. Each Altar Server (2) should be given a tip of \$10. The wedding sacristan should be given a tip of \$25.*

M. LITURGICAL MUSIC Music is an important part of our Worship as Catholics. As you know, we take music very seriously here at Seton Parish! Our musicians are professionals, and will be happy to help you with your music needs.

1. **MUSIC DIRECTOR** The Parish Music Director / Organist will work with you to plan your wedding music. The director, who works for the parish, is the *only* person authorized to arrange for music at Seton. The director has cantors, soloists and instrumentalists available to enhance your wedding music. Please fill out and send in the WEDDING MUSIC REQUEST FORM as soon as possible to begin a discussion of your music plans, options and music fees. Billing and payment for all wedding music is handled by the director and will reflect music choices, personnel contracted and the number of meetings requested.

2. **MUSICAL SELECTIONS** Often requests are made for currently popular songs of questionable liturgical value. A reading of their lyrics will often reveal that they in no way refer to the sacred aspect of marriage. **All music at weddings should reflect the reverence and dignity befitting the Sacred Liturgy.** A song which has no relationship to the liturgy has no place in the wedding celebration. Music from secular sources, Broadway musicals, popular songs dealing with love and marriage, would be more effectively used outside the religious celebration. **All requests for music at your wedding must be discussed with, and approved by, the Celebrant and the Music Director.**

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N RECEIVING LINES It is possible to do this in the lobby or on the front plaza of the church.

A LAST NOTE:

The throwing of rice, bird seed, flower petals or confetti creates litter and hazards. Also, the use of rice, which is food, is an insult to the poor and starving throughout the world. Please advise your guests of this.

Lately, we've found it necessary to remind families that alcohol of any type is not permitted to be used on church property. Littering is reprehensible anywhere, and is especially so on church property. Those found not respecting church property or its sacred character will be asked to leave.

V. SPECIAL SITUATIONS There are some circumstances which may not apply to you, but it is important for us to mention them. In some of these circumstances, we may not be able to set a date for your wedding right away.

1. **PREVIOUS MARRIAGES** If either of you has been married before in a manner recognized by Church law, we can refer you to the Marriage Tribunal for possible annulment of your previous marriage.

2. **COHABITATION** Our Faith *does not* approve of "living together" before marriage. **It is reasonable to request that couples who wish their parish community to sponsor a public ceremony must also publicly respect Catholic moral standards.** Unless you are willing to separate, a wedding ceremony rather than a Nuptial Mass may be more appropriate for you.

3. **TEENAGE MARRIAGES** The Church generally discourages teenage marriages. If you are a teen, we cannot witness your marriage unless we talk with the parents of both of you, get their consent, and retain a notarized letter expressing their consent. Ordinarily, teens are referred to the *Family Consultation Service* of the Archdiocese for evaluation. This helps you determine whether you are mature enough to handle the responsibilities of marriage.

4. **PREGNANCY** We are especially cautious when pregnancy complicates the engagement. Pregnancy is never

a reason for you to rush into marriage. In this case, the *Family Consultation Service* of the Archdiocese, or a similar agency, helps couples make good decisions.

5. **PSYCHOLOGICAL MATURITY** As Catholics, we understand that the decision to marry may well be the most important decision you will make in your entire life. This is especially the case when we consider the fact that "marriage is for life." After speaking with you, the priest or deacon may have doubts about your readiness to enter into a lifelong commitment. He may ask you to speak to a counselor from the *Family Consultation Service* of the Archdiocese to help you to assess your readiness, and to make the right decision.

6. **NON-PRACTICING CATHOLICS** If you were baptized in the Catholic Church, but no longer choose to exercise the right and duty of membership in the Church, particularly the right and duty of participating in the Sunday Worship of the Catholic community, you pose a special concern for this parish in terms of your readiness for the Sacrament of Marriage. We will do our best to help you remedy this situation where it exists. Such conditions may affect the length of your preparation and the type of liturgy that may be appropriate.

7. **CONVALIDATION** Because the Church does not accept the validity of a civil ceremony for Catholics who are obliged to be married in a Catholic Church, we congratulate those couples who choose to have their love for each other blessed by the Church with a Sacramental Bond. In such a case though, the couple does not need to obtain another civil license. Normally, they will be asked to go through the normal preparations for a couple getting married, including the *Marriage Preparation Program*.

A FINAL WORD

Most couples will spend close to 100 hours planning their wedding while spending only about 8 hours planning their wedded life together. Perhaps the best way to prepare for sharing a wedded life together is to come to church and receive Holy Communion together (don't forget Confession) during your engagement. The Lord has a special way of blessing engaged couples. Plan plenty of discussion time. Your engagement is a license to ask one another difficult questions. Talk with happily married couples; they are the best marriage teachers. Learn as much as you can about the importance of feelings in your relationship. *And pray!*

THE SCHEDULE OF YOUR MARRIAGE PREPARATION

- I. The Initial Meeting** (*before* you book the hall)
1. Call the Parish Office and make an appointment.
Just bring yourself and your fiancé.
 2. Set the date
 3. You are told what paperwork you will need
 4. Homework for next time:
 - a. Sign up for (and go to) *Marriage Prep*.
 - b. Get all of the papers and certificates
 - c. Watch the DVD: *The Vocation of Marriage*
 - d. Come to church together *every* Sunday!
- II. The Second Meeting** (immediately after *Marriage Prep*.)
1. Bring all paperwork (fill out dispensations if needed)
 2. Discuss the DVD & *Marriage Prep*.
 3. Homework for next time:
 - a. Listen to the CD of Dr. Janet Smith
 - b. Prepare last page of this booklet, Liturgy Planner
 - c. Register for and begin *NFP Class*
 - d. Be in contact with the Director of Music
 - e. Come to church together *every* Sunday!
- III. The Third Meeting** (at least one month before wedding day)
1. Discuss Dr. Smith's CD
 2. Set the Rehearsal Date
 3. Finalize the choices for the wedding
 4. Take the *Pre-Matrimonial Investigation (PMI)*
 5. Homework:
 - a. Get wedding license
 - b. Come to church together *every* Sunday!
- IV. The Wedding Rehearsal**
1. All participants arrive *on time*
 2. Bring the offering for the parish
 3. Bring the music fee, altar servers tip, sacristan tip
 4. Bring the wedding license
 5. Confession either the week before or after rehearsal!
- V. The BIG DAY** -- May God be with you!

SUMMARY CHECK LIST

Do you have...

- New certificates of Baptism for Catholics or proof of Baptism by letter or certificate for non-Catholics
- Record of First Communion and Confirmation
- Letters of Freedom for non-Catholics (notarized declarations of freedom to marry by parents or close relatives)
- Letter of Permission from your Pastor(s) if neither party is a parishioner of Seton
- Parental permission in the form of a notarized letter if you are under age 21
- Attendance Certificate from *Marriage Prep*.
- Declaration of Nullity Application (if needed) and Offering (\$75).
- Dispensation Application (if needed) and offering (\$75).
- Attendance Certificate from the *NFP Course*
- Wedding License
- Ceremony and Reading selections for the wedding written down on the *LITURGY PLANNER WORKSHEET* (pp. 35/36)
- Offering for church brought to rehearsal in the envelope provided (\$500)
- Music Fee brought to rehearsal in an envelope marked *Director of Sacred Music*
- Tips for Altar Servers (\$10 each) and Sacristan (\$25) in envelope, clearly marked.

OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

1. Genesis 1:26-28, 31a

A reading from the Book of Genesis.

Then God said:

“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground.”

God created man in his image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying: “Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth.” God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good.

The word of the Lord.

Response: *Thanks be to God.*

2. Genesis 2:18-24

A reading from the Book of Genesis.

The Lord God said: “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him.” So the Lord God formed out of the ground wild animals and various birds of the air, and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them; whatever the man called each of them would be its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of the air, and all wild animals; but none proved to be the suitable partner for the man. So the Lord God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. The Lord God then built up into a woman the rib that he had taken from the man. When he brought her to the man, the man said, “This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called ‘woman,’ for out of ‘her man’ this one has been taken.”

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.

The word of the Lord.

Response: *Thanks be to God.*

3. Tobit 8:4b-8

A reading from the Book of Tobit.

On their wedding night, Tobiah arose from bed and said to his wife, "Sister, get up. Let us pray and beg our Lord to have mercy on us and to grant us deliverance." Sarah got up, and they started to pray and beg that deliverance might be theirs. They began with these words: "Blessed are you, O God of our fathers; praised be your name forever and ever. Let the heavens and all your creation praise you forever. You made Adam and you gave him his wife Eve to be his help and support; and from these two the human race descended. You said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; let us make him a partner like himself.' Now, Lord, you know that I take this wife of mine not because of lust, but for a noble purpose. Call down your mercy on me and on her, and allow us to live together to a happy old age." They said together, "Amen, amen."

The word of the Lord.

Response: *Thanks be to God.*

4. Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

A reading from the Book of Proverbs.

When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls. Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an unfailing prize. She brings him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She obtains wool and flax and makes cloth with skillful hands. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her fingers ply the spindle. She reaches out her hands to the poor, and extends her arms to the needy. Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her a reward of her labors, and let her works praise her at the city gates.

The word of the Lord.

Response: *Thanks be to God.*

5. Song of Songs 2:8-10, 14, 16a; 8:6-7a

A reading from the Song of Songs.

Hark! My lover - here he comes springing across the mountains, leaping across the hills. My lover is like a gazelle or a young stag. Here he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattices. My lover speaks; he says to me, "Arise, my beloved, my dove, my beautiful one, and come! "O my dove in the clefts of the rock, in the secret recesses of the cliff, let me see you, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and you are lovely." My lover belongs to me and I to him. He says to me: "Set me as a seal on your heart, as a seal on your arm; For stern as death is love, relentless as the nether-world is devotion; its flames are a blazing fire. Deep waters cannot quench love, nor floods sweep it away."

The word of the Lord.

Response: *Thanks be to God.*

6. Sirach 26:1-4; 13-16

A reading from the Book of Sirach.

Blessed the husband of a good wife, twice-lengthened are his days; A worthy wife brings joy to her husband, peaceful and full is his life. A good wife is a generous gift bestowed upon him who fears the Lord; Be he rich or poor, his heart is content, and a smile is ever on his face. A gracious wife delights her husband, her thoughtfulness puts flesh on his bones; A gift from the Lord is her governed speech, and her firm virtue is of surpassing worth. Choicest of blessings is a modest wife, priceless her chaste soul. A holy and decent woman adds grace upon grace; indeed, no price is worthy of her temperate soul. Like the sun rising in the Lord's heavens, the beauty of a virtuous wife is the radiance of her home.

The word of the Lord.

Response: *Thanks be to God.*

7. Jeremiah 31:31-32a, 33-34a

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah.

The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers: the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth from the land of Egypt. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer will they have need to teach their friends and relatives how to know the Lord. All, from least to greatest, shall know me, says the Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALMS

1. Psalm 33:12 and 18, 20-21, 22

The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

Response: The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

Blessed the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he has chosen for his own inheritance. But see, the eyes of the Lord are upon those who fear him, upon those who hope for his kindness.

Response: The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

Our soul waits for the Lord,
Who is our help and our shield,
For in him our hearts rejoice;
In his holy name we trust.

Response: The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us who have put our hope in you.

Response: The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

2. Psalm 103: 1-2, 8 and 13, 17-18a

The Lord is kind and merciful.

Response: *The Lord is kind and merciful.*

Bless the Lord, O my soul;
and all my being, bless his holy name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits

Response: *The Lord is kind and merciful.*

Merciful and gracious is the Lord,
slow to anger and abounding in kindness.
As a father has compassion on his children,
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear
him.

Response: *The Lord is kind and merciful.*

But the kindness of the Lord is from eternity
to eternity toward those who fear him,
And his justice towards children's children
among those who keep his covenant.

Response: *The Lord is kind and merciful.*

NEW TESTAMENT READINGS

1. Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters:

If God is for us, who can be against us? He did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, will he not also give us everything else along with him? Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who acquits us. Who will condemn? It is Christ Jesus who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? No, in all these things, we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Response: *Thanks be to God.*

2. Romans 12:1-2, 9-13

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect. Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality.

The word of the Lord.

Response: *Thanks be to God.*

3. Romans 15:1b-3a, 5-7, 13

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters:

We ought to put up with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves; let each of us please our neighbor for the good, for building up. For Christ did not please himself. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think in harmony with one another, in keeping with Christ Jesus, that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The word of the Lord.

Response: *Thanks be to God.*

4. 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:8a

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.

Brothers and sisters:

Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts. But I shall show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

The word of the Lord.

Response: *Thanks be to God.*

5. Ephesians 5:2a, 25-32

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians.

Brothers and sisters:

Live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, that he might present to himself the Church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. So also husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the Church, because we are members of his Body. For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the Church.

The word of the Lord.

Response: *Thanks be to God.*

6. 1 John 3:18-24

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John.

Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. Now this is how we shall know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us. Those who keep his commandments remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit that he gave us.

The word of the Lord.

Response: *Thanks be to God.*

7. 1 John 4:7-12

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John.

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only-begotten Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another. No one has ever seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us.

The word of the Lord.

Response: *Thanks be to God.*

RITE OF MARRIAGE *(after Homily)*

A. QUESTIONS TO THE COUPLE

Priest: Dearly beloved, you have come together into the house of the Church, so that in the presence of the Church's minister and the community your intention to enter into Marriage may be strengthened by the Lord with a sacred seal. Christ abundantly blesses the love that binds you. Through a special Sacrament, he enriches and strengthens those he has already consecrated by Holy Baptism, that they may be faithful to each other forever and assume all the responsibilities of married life. And so, in the presence of the Church, I ask you to state your intentions.

N. and N., have you come here to enter into Marriage without coercion, freely and wholeheartedly?

Bride and Groom: I have.

Priest: Are you prepared, as you follow the path of Marriage, to love and honor each other for as long as you both shall live?

Bride and Groom: I am.

Priest: Are you prepared to accept children lovingly from God and to bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?

Bride and Groom: I am.

B. GIVING OF CONSENT (VOWS)

Option 1

Groom: I, N, take you, N., to be my wife. I promise to be faithful to you, in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love you and to honor you all the days of my life.

Bride: I, N, take you, N., to be my husband. I promise to be faithful to you, in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love you and to honor you all the days of my life.

Priest: May the Lord in his kindness strengthen the consent you have declared before the Church, and graciously bring to fulfillment his blessing within you. What God joins together, let no one put asunder.

Let us bless the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Option 2

Groom: I, N., take you, N., for my lawful wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish until death do us part.

Bride: I, N., take you, N., for my lawful husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish until death do us part.

Priest: May the Lord in his kindness strengthen the consent you have declared before the Church, and graciously bring to fulfillment his blessing within you. What God joins together, let no one put asunder.

Let us bless the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Option 3

Priest: N. do you take N., to be your wife? Do you promise to be faithful to her in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love her and to honor her all the days of your life?

Groom: I do.

Priest: N., do you take N., to be your husband? Do you promise to be faithful to him in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love him and to honor him all the days of your life?

Bride: I do.

Priest: May the Lord in his kindness strengthen the consent you have declared before the Church, and graciously bring to fulfillment his blessing within you. What God joins together, let no one put asunder.

Let us bless the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Option 4

Priest: N., do you take N., for your lawful wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish until death do you part?

Groom: I do.

Priest: N., do you take N., for your lawful husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish until death do you part?

Bride: I do.

Priest: May the Lord in his kindness strengthen the consent you have declared before the Church, and graciously bring to fulfillment his blessing within you. What God joins together, let no one put asunder.

Let us bless the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

C. BLESSING OF THE RINGS

1. Priest: May the Lord bless (+) these rings which you will give to each other as a sign of love and fidelity.

Response: Amen

2. Priest: Bless O Lord, these rings, which we bless (+) in your name, so that those who wear them may remain entirely faithful to each other, abide in peace and in your will, and live always in mutual charity. Through Christ our Lord.

Response: Amen

3. Priest: Bless (+) and sanctify your servants in their love, O Lord, and let these rings, a sign of their faithfulness, remind them of their love for one another. Through Christ our Lord.

Response: Amen

D. BESTOWAL OF THE RINGS

Groom / Bride:

N., receive this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

E. UNIVERSAL PRAYER (PETITIONS)

(occurs after optional Unity Candle ceremony)

Priest: On this joyous occasion, we call to mind God's many blessings, and we ask him to hear our prayers.

READER: Please respond: Lord hear our prayer.

1. For Pope _____, our Archbishop, _____, and all those who lead the Church on earth, let us pray to the Lord. (**Response**)

2. For N. and N. who are united in Matrimony this day, that God may help them to live as true partners in life and love, let us pray to the Lord. (**Response**)

3. For all married couples and families, that the Lord may guide and protect them in all moments of life, let us pray to the Lord. (**Response**)

4. For the sick and suffering, that we may be a sign of God's compassion to them, let us pray to the Lord. (**Response**)

5. For those who have died, and especially for the deceased members of the families and friends of the bride and the groom, _____ (deceased family or friend's names), let us pray to the Lord. (**Response**)

Priest: Loving Father, we ask you to hear our prayers and to bless all those united in Matrimony, that we may always know of your mercy and love for us. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

LITURGY PLANNER

Read through the selections on pages 14 through 34. When you have made your choices, complete this form. **Tear out this page, and bring it with you when you speak with the priest or deacon to finalize your wedding ceremony.**

Bride: _____

Groom: _____

Official Best Man: _____

Official Maid of Honor: _____

Date of Wedding: _____ Time: _____

Date of Rehearsal: _____ Time: _____

Old Testament Reading: Selection # _____ Page: _____

READER: _____

Responsorial Psalm: Selection # _____ Page: _____

New Testament Reading: Selection # _____ Page: _____

READER: _____

____ We prefer that the priest or deacon chooses the readings

Vows: Selection # _____ Page: _____

Blessing of Rings: Selection # _____ Page: _____

UNIVERSAL PRAYER (PETITIONS)

You may add the names of the deceased members of your families as a part of petition # 5 (see page 34).

READER: _____

___ We prefer that the priest or deacon reads the petitions

Presentation of the Gifts (Bread & Wine):

PRESENTERS:

1. _____

2. _____

Receiving Holy Communion (Body & Blood of Christ):

Sacred Host only: _____

Both: _____

Sacred Host & Precious Blood (Bride/Groom and Best Man/Maid of Honor Only)

Special Devotions (optional):

Unity Candle _____

Bouquet for the Blessed Mother _____

Other: _____



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