

The Celebration of Matrimony

The heart of a Catholic wedding is the exchange of vows, formally called "The Consent" because by them you say yes to the love God has given you and to the married life.

On pages 88–95, you will find that each bold letter-numeral code is paired with a tag that reads Form 1 (Within Mass), Form 2 (Without Mass), or Form 3 (Between a Catholic and a Catechumen or a Non-Christian). These correspond to the three forms of the Celebration of Matrimony that are outlined on page 10 and will be used by parish staff to prepare the liturgical books for your wedding. **Be sure to keep in mind which form of the celebration will be used at your wedding (see page 2) and then follow that form through the various choices you are asked to make.**

The Questions before the Consent

The presider will invite you and your witnesses forward, then pray:

G1 (Form 1)

G2 (Form 2)

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 for ever
and assume all the responsibilities of married life.
And so, in the presence of the Church,
I ask you to state your intentions.

The priest or deacon will then ask about your readiness to marry.

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

The bridegroom and the bride each say:
I have.

The priest or deacon continues:
**Are you prepared, as you follow the path of Marriage,
to love and honor each other for as long as you both shall live?**

The bridegroom and the bride each say:
I am.

The following question may be omitted if, for example, the couple is advanced in years.

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

The bridegroom and the bride each say:
I am.

G3 (Form 3)

Dearly beloved,
you have come together here
before a minister of the Church
and in the presence of the community
so that your intention to enter into Marriage
may be strengthened by the Lord with a sacred seal,
and your love be enriched with his blessing,
so that you may have strength
to be faithful to each other for ever
and to assume all the responsibilities of married life.
And so, in the presence of the Church,
I ask you to state your intentions.

The priest or deacon will then ask about your readiness to marry.

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

The bridegroom and the bride each say:
I have.

The priest or deacon who presides continues:
**Are you prepared, as you follow the path of Marriage,
to love and honor each other for as long as you both shall live?**

The bridegroom and the bride each say:
I am.

The following question may be omitted if, for example, the couple is advanced in years.

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

The bridegroom and the bride each say:
I am.

The Consent (Marriage Vows)



Next are your marriage vows. The Church calls this “The Consent” because you are consenting to God’s call to Christian marriage. You are saying “I do” to the love he has planted in your hearts and to becoming a visible sign of his love in the world. By exchanging marriage vows—by giving your consent—you say yes.

Please choose from the First or Second formula for the vows and whether you want to say the words yourself or simply say “I do” after the minister poses the vows as questions. Talk with the priest or deacon about how to handle the exchange of vows. You can recite them from memory, read them from a card, or be prompted by the priest or deacon.

Please be sure to record your choice on the selection form.

First Formula

H1 (Form 1)

H5 (Form 2)

H9 (Form 3)

Since it is your intention to enter the covenant of Holy Matrimony, join your right hands and declare your consent before God and his Church.

You will join hands and the groom begins:

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.

The bride says:

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.

H3 (Form 1)

H7 (Form 2)

H11 (Form 3)

If, however, it seems preferable for pastoral reasons, the presider may obtain consent from the couple through questions.

First he asks the bridegroom:

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?
The groom: I do.

Then he asks the bride:

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?
The bride: I do.

Second Formula

H2 (Form 1)

H6 (Form 2)

H10 (Form 3)

The groom says:

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.

The bride says:

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.

H4 (Form 1)

H8 (Form 2)

H12 (Form 3)

The presider may obtain consent from the couple through questions.

First the one presiding asks the groom:
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?

The groom: I do.

Next, the one presiding asks the bride:
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?

The bride: I do.

Reception of the Consent

On behalf of the Church and the people of God, the priest or deacon receives the consent of the couple using one of two formulas, by saying:

H13 (Form 1)

H14 (Form 2)

H15 (Form 3)

- (a) 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.

The priest or deacon invites those present to praise God:
Let us bless the Lord.

All reply:
Thanks be to God.

Another acclamation may be sung or said.

or:

- (b) May the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God who joined together our first parents in paradise, strengthen and bless in Christ the consent you have declared before the Church, so that what God joins together, no one may put asunder.

The priest or deacon invites those present to praise God:
Let us bless the Lord.

All reply:
Thanks be to God.

Another acclamation may be sung or said.

Blessing and Giving of Rings



Your wedding rings are a symbol of the vows you take. The circles convey the unending nature of your bond, and the precious metal expresses its strength and immeasurable value.

Choose a blessing for your rings and record it on your selection form.

I1 (Form 1)

I2 (Form 2)

I3 (Form 3)

May the Lord bless † these rings
which you will give to each other
as a sign of love and fidelity.

All respond: Amen.

I4 (Form 1, 2, or 3)

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.

All respond: Amen.

I5 (Form 1, 2, or 3)

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.

All respond: Amen.

As the bridegroom places his wife's ring on her ring finger, he may say:
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.

As the bride places her husband's ring on his ring finger, she may say:
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.

**If bride or groom is not Christian, omit the Sign of the Cross.*

Blessing and Giving of the *Arras* (Optional)

I6 (Form 1)

I7 (Form 2)

I8 (Form 3)

If you wish to include this blessing (see page 8), please indicate this on your selection sheet.

The one presiding says:

**Bless, † O Lord, these *arras*
that N. and N. will give to each other
and pour over them the abundance of your good gifts.**

The husband takes the *arras* and hands them over to his wife, saying:
N., receive these *arras* as a pledge of God's blessing
and a sign of the good gifts we will share.

The wife takes the *arras* and hands them over to the husband,
saying:

N., receive these *arras* as a pledge of God's blessing
and a sign of the good gifts we will share.

Universal Prayer



During the wedding ceremony the community celebrates a love that is meant to touch many people. So it is fitting that the first Christian service you undertake as a married couple is to pray for those in need of God's love and healing. The Universal Prayer (or Prayer of the Faithful) should include intercessions for the Church, for peace in the world, for you as a new couple, for the sick and those unable to be present, and for any deceased family and friends.

You can choose one of the sample sets of intercessions that follow or write your own if the parish in which you celebrate your wedding so allows. These sample prayers are available in electronic form at TogetherforLifeOnline.com. If you are invited to write your own, visit the same website for instructions and a simple worksheet that will help you do so.

J1

The priest or deacon begins:

**Dear brothers and sisters,
as we call to mind the special gift of grace and charity
by which God has been pleased to crown and consecrate
the love of our sister N. and our brother N.,
let us commend them to the Lord.**

A reader continues:

**That these faithful Christians, N. and N.,
newly joined in Holy Matrimony,
may always enjoy health and well-being,
let us pray to the Lord.**

R. Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer

Or another appropriate response of the people.

**That he will bless their covenant
as he chose to sanctify marriage at Cana in Galilee,
let us pray to the Lord. R.**

**That they be granted perfect and fruitful love,
peace and strength,
and that they bear faithful witness to the name of Christian,
let us pray to the Lord. R.**

**That the Christian people
may grow in virtue day by day
and that all who are burdened by any need
may receive the help of grace from above,
let us pray to the Lord. R.**

**That the grace of the Sacrament
will be renewed by the Holy Spirit
in all married persons here present,
let us pray to the Lord. R.**

The priest or deacon concludes:

**Graciously pour out upon this husband and wife, O Lord,
the Spirit of your love,
to make them one heart and one soul,
so that nothing whatever may divide those you have joined
and no harm come to those you have filled with your blessing.
Through Christ our Lord.**

R. Amen.

J2

The priest or deacon begins:
**Dear brothers and sisters,
let us accompany this new family with our prayers,**

**that the mutual love of this couple may grow daily
and that God in his kindness
will sustain all families throughout the world.**

A reader continues:
**For this bride and groom,
and for their well-being as a family,
let us pray to the Lord.**

R. Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Or another appropriate response of the people.

**For their relatives and friends,
and for all who have assisted this couple,
let us pray to the Lord. R.**

**For young people preparing to enter Marriage,
and for all whom the Lord is calling to another state in life,
let us pray to the Lord. R.**

**For all families throughout the world
and for lasting peace among all people,
let us pray to the Lord. R.**

**For all members of our families
who have passed from this world,
and for all the departed,
let us pray to the Lord. R.**

**For the Church, the holy People of God,
and for unity among all Christians,
let us pray to the Lord. R.**

The priest or deacon concludes:
**Lord Jesus, who are present in our midst,
as N. and N. seal their union
accept our prayer
and fill us with your Spirit.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.**

R. Amen.



When using Form 2, Celebrating Matrimony without Mass, please
turn to page 102.