

(Blessing of the Couples)

Priest:
God, Eternal Father, bless and consecrate these couples in their love for each other. May the Preparations for their Wedding Day be blessed and filled with peace and joy. Draw them always closer to you and protect them from any troubles or worries. We ask you this through Christ our Lord. Amen. And may Almighty God bless you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



MARRIAGE PREPARATION | # 4
LOVE FOR A LIFETIME

The Door of our House

Sacrament of Marriage

God is behind our Love

If we think back to our own childhood, we can remember different religious experiences, We can remember times when we were in Church with our families or with the School. Perhaps we can remember our First Holy Communion There are many religious experiences that have meaning for us.

Since being young, we have often prayed to God. Our relationship to God was simple and spontaneous. We prayed in our family and in the Church. Sometimes we prayed on our own. We spoke to God about our childlike worries and brought our thanks and gratitude.

As life went on our relationship to God and Church changed. Doubts came on the horizon, there were a few critical issues. However, we always knew that somehow God had our lives in his hands - that he was guiding us.

Now all this has changed. God has entered our lives in a new way. He has taken hold of our lives in a way that he hasn't done before. We have found our partner and our future husband or wife. Through this our relationship to God has changed. It is not the same as it was before. God is different. He has a new Name. He is the God who has helped us find each other and who has given us to each other. Nothing happens by coincidence. Nothing happens by chance for God. We can learn to understand God more, when we look at our partner. God has sent him or her to us.

A Shared Blessing

Priest:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son +, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Father in heaven, we come before you tonight to ask for your Blessing. We ask you to bless in your love all the couples that are going to be married soon. Keep all harm away from them and may they always know how close you are to them in this time of preparation. We thank you for our Preparation Meetings together and for the thoughts and experiences we could share. Bless us all now and bless those who we carry in our own hearts. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All:

Amen.

Speaker:

These are words that give us strength and confidence: "Love is always patient and kind. It is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited, it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins, but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes."

(The Couples repeat the following after priest)

I rejoice that I have chosen you in the Sacrament of Marriage...

I rejoice that you have chosen me...

Together we belong for always...

Accept me as I am...

with my limitations and my talents...

with my hopes and with my future...

Wherever you go, I will go

where you live, I will live...

Together we will build the House of our Marriage...

A House built on the Rock of Jesus Christ...

bridegroom. The Blue Marriage Documents have to be handed to your Parish at least three days before the Wedding date. The Marriage Certificate will be given at the end of the Wedding Celebration in Church. Fee for the Parish Registrar: about \$50. (Costs may vary from place to place) Telephone for Bolton Registrar: 01204 531185.

✓ **Donations**

Catholic Churches usually do not have “fees” for a Wedding, since it is a Sacrament. However, a donation for the Church is always welcome and needed. How much should the donation be? An appropriate donation is based on the comparison with the other Wedding expenses. The Wedding in Church for Christians is more important than anything else.

Prayer for a Passionate, Creative Love

Lord, send out your Spirit
and renew the face of the earth.

Father, Jesus gave his life

because he loved deeply and completely.

May our love for one another

be all encompassing and all consuming.

Make our love be pleasurable.

Make it be creative as it is stable,

passionate as it is respectful,

gentle as it is strong,

so that all who know us will see in our

love the hand of our Creator God.

And when you bless us with children

may they grow in the knowledge of the

passionate and energizing love that

has its beginning in the love you have

for the world and all its peoples.

We ask this through Jesus,

our Lord and brother.

Amen.

When we come together in Church to seal our love and give each other the Sacrament of Marriage, we can say this...

God has given us the gift of each other. He has brought us both together. He sees us together as a unity. We have become an original “invention” of God. He has created something new in wanting us to become husband and wife.

We become who we are in our relationship to others. All through our lives we have lived, shared, worked, and made experiences with other people. God was involved in all of this. There wasn't a moment of our lives that could have been separated from God, from his love and from his care. He was present in our lives in every step, in every experience, in every joy or sorrow. God gave us our parents, our surroundings, our friends, our experiences as a child, our teachers, our friends, the people we trust. We was present in our decisions in life, he was present also in our guilt and in our sorrow.

Now he has given us something else. He has given us the gift of a husband or wife - someone who trusts and loves us so much that they want to spend their whole life with us. It is worth thinking about the fact that God has always known who we would marry and share our lives with!

Our partner is a gift from God. A gift to me and only for me. At the same time our husband or wife is also a message from God. “Give that person, your partner, who I have brought to you, all your love, your strength and your fidelity. Be there for each other!”

We experience and love our partner and at the same time we see in him or her the Living God, working, loving, sharing, caring and giving me new life.

For this reason our relationship to God has to be different. We just can't pray to him in the way he have always prayed since our childhood. When we hear that God is Love and that God loves each one of us, then we know this to be true, from our own personal experience because we have experienced this ourselves, in our own lives.

It is God who is behind our unity. Behind our story as a couple - of meeting each other, of falling in love - God was always guiding and protecting. The story of our love began long before we even met each other, before we were even born. The story of our love began in eternity, when God saw us together and willed that we would be together. What God has joined together will never fail. He will carry us and strengthen us. We belong together that is enough!

God is the Third Person in our Covenant

We are not perfect. We make mistakes. We have limitations. We can hurt others. That is a daily human experience. We also have our limitations, when it comes to having a happy and fulfilled marriage. We also realize our limitations, when we want to give our best and all our love to someone. Some people think, that the Christian vision of married and family life is too much. The ideal is too high for today's living and pressures. That's why some don't chose this way and take another road, that seems easier for them.

Through the Sacrament of Christian Marriage we have a foundation that carries us - that strength, that love is God Himself. If God has called us together, if it is his wish that we form a unity of love and life, then he will give us all the strength and grace we need to keep that unity alive. This

✓ Best Man

The best man plays a key role in making sure the arrangements run smoothly. He brings the rings and any money necessary for incidental expenses on the day.

✓ Altar Servers

These aren't always necessary but some of your friends or servers from the parish may be used to serving at Mass.

✓ Ushers

It's a good idea to ask family and friends to make your guests feel welcome. Those who are familiar with the church can show people to their places and give out books. It is traditional for the bride's guests to sit on the left hand side of the church and for the groom's to sit on the right. Ushers can also help to tidy up the Church after the Wedding Ceremony is finished.

✓ Music

Your choice of music can transform the ceremony, especially if it encourages everyone to join in. Make an appointment to meet the organist to book him or her for the day and also to discuss what you have chosen.

✓ Flowers

Your priest will let you know appropriate times when they can be arranged in the church and who you need to contact about this.

✓ Photography

The taking of photos and video recordings needs to be discussed with your priest beforehand. Most churches allow photography during the wedding service but you will appreciate that it's important that this doesn't distract people in any way. Making video recordings can be a special problem here, it needs careful planning. Most churches do not have enough natural light for photographs or video filming. You will need to check with your photographer. If special lighting is necessary discuss this with your priest.

✓ Register of Marriages,

Go to your Registrar Office, up to twelve months before your Wedding, not less than fifteen days - Application for a Wedding Certificate. Telephone to make an appointment. Usually Passport or full Birth Certificate and Driver's License needed. If you were born after 1982, you have to bring your mother's full Birth Certificate. Cost: about £30 for bride and £30 for

choose a Nuptial Mass although only the Catholic partner may receive Holy Communion.

✓ **Wedding Service without Mass**

It is quite normal to get married in the Catholic Church without celebrating a Nuptial Mass. This does not make it less of a true marriage and the service without mass is equally impressive and joyful. If one of you is not a Catholic you and your family may feel more at home with this ceremony. This is the form your marriage service will take if one of you isn't baptized.

✓ **Wedding Candle**

There is a beautiful symbol of the wedding candle which is very popular at weddings today. Three candles are on the altar or on a suitable place: two family candles and a wedding candle. At the beginning of the ceremony, the family candles are lit - perhaps by the two mothers of the bride and groom - and then after the vows are made, the bride and groom take a light from these candles and light together the wedding candle in the middle.

✓ **Sacrament of Reconciliation**

A beautiful way to prepare for your Wedding Day is to go to confession. Since Marriage is a Sacrament, you need to prepare for it in a spiritual way. Choose a good time and go to confession - you won't regret it!

✓ **Readers**

The priest will read the gospel at your wedding. There will be other readings from the scriptures too. You might like to ask some of your guests to read for you. They will need to practise the piece so that they understand what they're reading. There are also the prayers of faithful or 'bidding' prayers'. You can write these yourselves with the priest's help. He will have some general prayers that you can choose from or adapt if you want to. Another guest could read these.

✓ **Witnesses**

You must choose to adults to witness your wedding by signing the register. They don't have to be Catholics. Normally the best man and a bridesmaid are chosen but it could be your parents or close friends.

attitude and confidence is only possible if you believe if God and if you believe that he commits himself to you.

God wants us to be together. This gives our love a Divine Light, a Divine Strength, a Divine Nearness, God is the Third Person, the Third Partner in our Marriage. This is what we mean when we talk about Marriage being a Sacrament. Christ's commitment to us is for always. He never takes back his promise or his "yes" to our lives.

In the Holy Mass, Christ is present in the Bread and Wine of Holy Communion. In our Marriage Christ is also present in our love for each other and in our Covenant. We can forgive each other, because Jesus in our Marriage forgives us. We take time to listen to each other, because Jesus in our Marriage wants to listen to us, to our needs, to our hopes and dreams. We can love each other for always because Jesus in our Marriage loves us for always and will never take his love back. We can be patient with each other's weaknesses, because even in the worst row, Christ never takes his leave or departs. His love is for always.

Our Marriage Sacrament - We are just great!

Envy is a terrible thing! People are envious of the car, that someone has, or the garden, the clothes, the house, the wages, the holidays, etc., etc. Envy makes people sick and bitter.

We don't need to compare ourselves to anyone. We don't need anyone's approval. We only need the approval of the one who led us together in a Covenant - the Third Partner in our Marriage. Through God's "yes" to us in the Sacrament - we are just great! We feel good about ourselves! We enjoy our decision! We see the good in each other and are prepared to talk about the good in us first

God created us for love. We have an endless source of love within us. Knowing that God's love carries and strengthens us is the meaning and aim of the Sacrament of Marriage.

Planning Your Wedding

Most people are nervous on their wedding day. You'll be less nervous if you're well prepared. If everything is planned in advance you can just enjoy the great day. If you can, try to get a few quite days before the wedding. You don't want to spoil things by being too tired. You could end up going on honeymoon exhausted - maybe even a little bad tempered!

Here are some practical points to think about when you are planning your wedding.

Work out a budget for your wedding on what you can afford. Expenses have a way of increasing without realising it and it's as well to begin marriage as you intend to carry on.

The priest is there to help you through this most important day. If you have any questions or anxieties don't hesitate to ask him. Arrangements for the wedding service vary from place to place but there's nearly always an opportunity for a brief rehearsal.

You have to make a number of decisions about the kind of service you want. The priest will explain the possibilities to you. Here are some of things you need to think about...

✓ **What kind of Service?**

There are two kinds of service in the Catholic Church. One is a 'Wedding service with Nuptial Mass'. This is when the wedding itself takes place as part of the Mass. The other is a 'Wedding Service without Mass'. The part where you make your promises is the same in each and both are joyful celebrations. You may find it helpful to discuss the alternatives with your priest before making a final decision.

✓ **Wedding Service with Nuptial Mass**

The Mass is extremely important to Catholics as it unites us with Jesus Christ in a special way. Normally two Catholics getting married would choose a Nuptial Mass. If one of you isn't Catholic but is baptized you can

