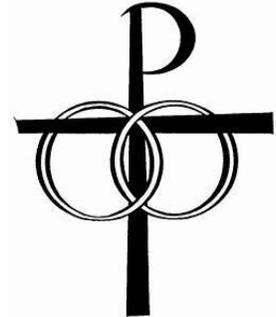


# Marriage

## 1. New Testament

- Eph 5:32, about marriage. “This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the church.”
  - “Mystery” (Greek) translated into Latin as “sacrament.” Sac = visible sign of invisible reality.
  - Love and union of married couple is visible sign of love and unity between Christ and the Church.
  - “Sacrament” in a broad sense, but not like baptism or eucharist until 12<sup>th</sup> c.
- 1 Cor 7: celibacy preferable to marriage. Paul thinks end of world is imminent.



## 2. Early Christianity: Married at home like everyone else

- Unlike the other sacraments, marriage existed long before Christians did.
- Christians married like other people, no special rituals or ministers.
  - Domestic, presided over by father of bride
  - Ring for bride, bride’s father hands her to groom, join right hands, white dress w red veil, eat cake as communion with new household gods, procession to groom’s home
- What made the couple married? Consent of spouses.
- What made marriage Christian? Baptism of spouses.
- No formal role for Christian clergy in West. Some couples asked bishop (pastor) for a blessing.
- Augustine: 3 “goods” of marr = children, mutual fidelity, permanence / sacr of Christ’s union with Church.
- Not a lot written about Christian marriage in early centuries. No ritual to preach about. (cf. bapt, euch)

## 3. Gnostic Influence: Negative attitude toward sex

- Gnosticism – a religious and philosophical movement. Believe there are two aspects of reality.
  - Spirit / Matter. Sacred / Profane. Immortal / Mortal. Apply to human: Soul / Body.
  - Sacred, spiritual is good. Profane material is bad, doesn’t last. Sex & marriage = material, body.
- Christians absorb Gnostic negative attitude toward sex, theologians remain suspicious of sex.
  - Affirm marriage is good, but sexual pleasure is sinful. Only purpose of marriage & sex is procreation.

## 4. Middle Ages: Church involved in legal aspects of marriage

- Fall of Roman Empire 476 C.E. Germanic tribes invade. Political vacuum. No functioning gov’t.
  - People with legal disputes related to marriage appeal to bishop to resolve.
    - e.g. divorce, inheritance, paternity, child support, etc.
  - Bishops began to do state gov’t role, e.g. determine impediments, judge validity, grant nullity.
  - By 1000 C.E., all marriages in Europe are under legal jurisdiction of Catholic Church.
  - Legal concerns become dominant questions.
- What constitutes marriage? How do bishops decide who is married? Two definitions.
  - Roman: consent of spouses. Germanic: sexual intercourse. Debated these for centuries.
  - Eventual compromise: Consent establishes, effects marriage. Sex completes, consummates.
- What is marriage? Legalistic thinking: Marriage is a contract. Language of rights and duties.
- Who is minister? Since marriage based on consent, done by spouses, couple is minister. (for West)
- List of 7 sac by 12<sup>th</sup> c., includes marriage. Legal terms: contract. Fruitful, faithful, permanent.
- Liturgy evolves gradually, 11<sup>th</sup> c. Near church, on porch, just inside door. Not in Mass till 20<sup>th</sup> c.
  - By 12<sup>th</sup> c, Christian wedding conducted by priest, not by family.
  - Council of Trent 16<sup>th</sup> c.: Official, mandatory Church ceremony. In presence of priest, two witnesses.
  - Exchange consent *before* Mass. Priest “I join you.” (*Ego conjungo vos.*) Mass, bless bride after Our Fr.

## 5. Vatican Council II, Constitution on Sacred Liturgy (1963)

- Revise and enrich the ritual. Regional and local customs may and should be retained. CSL 77
- Bishops in a region may compose its own rite, but must always include priest ask for consent. CSL 77
- Usually within Mass, after the gospel and homily. Blessing to include groom; vernacular OK. CSL 78

## 6. Teaching of Vatican Council II: “An Intimate Partnership of Life and Love” GS 48

- Legal language replaced by biblical and personalist terms, e.g. “covenant,” relationship, not “contract”
- Marriage is a “mutual giving of two persons” – not just one giving.
  - The spouses “help and serve each other” – not that one serves the other. GS 48
  - Married couples participate in the paschal mystery by loving each other as Christ loves, by this self-giving love, by giving themselves to their spouse.
- “Authentic married love is caught up in divine love.” Participation in love of God. “Led to God.” GS 48
- Marriage and sex not only for procreation, also for good of couple. Unites them in communion.
  - Sex is an expression of self-giving love, a total surrender of self to one's spouse. GS 48-49
  - Sex is life-giving not only in producing children, but also for the couple themselves. GS 48
- The family is a “domestic church.” “Parents are the first preachers of faith ... by word and example.” LG 11

## 7. Order of Celebrating Matrimony (1969, Latin revised 1990, English 2016)

### Introduction

- “A lifelong partnership,” “an intimate community of life and love.” OCM 1,4
  - Consent establishes marriage, freely given and freely received. OCM 2
  - Augustine's three goods still here: fidelity, “indissoluble,” children OCM 2,4
  - God calls the couple to marriage and continues to call them. OCM 11
  - Marriage is “a path to holiness” for the wife and husband. OCM 8
  - Couple is a visible sign or sacrament of Christ's love and unity with church. OCM 5, 8, 11, 14,3
- Like all sacraments, “matrimony presupposes and demands faith.” OCM 16
- Importance of participation of parish community, weddings are “communitarian,” not private. OCM 28
  - Preparation and celebration concern the “entire ecclesial community.” OCM 12
  - “Laypersons ... can play a part in various ways both in the spiritual preparation of the engaged couple and in the celebration of the rite itself. Moreover, the **entire Christian community** should cooperate to bear witness to the faith and to be a sign to the world of Christ's love.” OCM 26
  - Weddings could be celebrated at a parish Sunday Mass OCM 28
- Pastor's role: preach about marriage, prepare couples, celebrate the wedding liturgy well so visible sign is clear, help couples after they are married. OCM 14
- Couple should help plan the wedding liturgy: readings, texts for blessing, petitions, options OCM 29

“By the Sacrament of Matrimony Christian spouses signify and participate in the mystery of unity and fruitful love between Christ and the Church.”  
OCM 8

### Ritual

- For first time in history, the wedding ritual is placed *within* Mass. Between Word and Euch, response.
- Main elements should stand out: Liturgy of Word, Consent, Nuptial Blessing, Communion OCM 35
- Three possible rituals I. 2 Catholics (Mass) II. Cath & Bapt Christian (Lit Word) III. Cath & non-Christian
- Entrance procession (1969) – Couple enters together, or each w both parents. Not translated in 2016. [?]
- Participation by assembly -- New in 2016: acclamation after consent, hymn after giving rings OCM 65, 68
- Nuptial Blessing, now includes groom (as CSL 78 called for; not entirely successful)
  - Priest extends his hands over couple, sort of laying on hands OCM 74
  - New addition in 2016: now the blessing includes an epiclesis
- Equality: --process as partners, --same vows, --each give and receive a ring, --nuptial blessing for both.
- The arras (coins) and lazo (flower garland) for certain cultures in America. From Mexico, Philippines.