

CDWDS Confirms Order of Celebrating Matrimony, Second Edition

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has confirmed the English translation of the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony, Second Edition* (OCM), with a *recognitio* decree dated June 29, 2015 (Prot. n. 84/14). At present, the Secretariat for Divine Worship is engaged with a standard review to resolve any issues that are commonly addressed with new liturgical translations. Following this process, Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, USCCB President, will issue a decree of publication establishing the implementation date.

Significant Changes in the Second Edition

The first post-Conciliar *Ordo Celebrandi Matrimonium* was issued in 1969, and the English translation in use since then has been based on that edition. A second typical edition was issued in 1990, and is now finally appearing in an English translation. While the basic overall structure of the rite remains the same in this new edition, there are a number of interesting changes.

The Introduction in this second edition has been significantly expanded to include more extensive theological commentary, as well as pastoral instructions on the preparation of a couple for Marriage. This material should prove useful in catechesis and formation.

The rubrics for the Introductory Rites now make a clearer distinction between the two forms the entrance can take. Regarding the first, the Holy See observed that various countries have different practices for the entrance procession, and so the rubric now simply states: “The procession to the altar then takes place in the customary manner” (OCM, nos. 46, 81). The second form of the entrance remains as before, and the ministers greet the couple at the altar instead of processing with them from the narthex. After the Sign of the Cross and greeting, the new edition introduces two choices for an introductory admonition by the minister to the couple and the congregation. The Penitential Act is explicitly omitted and the Gloria is sung or said – an addition to the second edition that was already seen in the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*.

As before, the couple’s consent may be given as a declaration, or obtained through questions. Following the consent, the minister now has his choice of two options instead of one for the reception of the consent. Likewise new is the verse and response that follows, “Let us bless the Lord. / Thanks be to God.” Some flexibility with this new acclamation is permitted by the rubric that accompanies it: “Another acclamation may be sung or said” (OCM, nos. 65, 99). This introduction of an acclamation after the consent now more easily allows the gathered congregation to give expression to their joy at the joining of a couple in Marriage.

Another change to the second edition that has been apparent since the 2011 implementation of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition* is the inclusion of proper intercessions to be inserted in Eucharistic Prayers II and III, in addition to the proper *Hanc igitur* in Eucharistic Prayer I. The new translations of the three Nuptial Blessings have also been available since the promulgation of the current *Roman Missal*, though the ritual editions of the OCM will introduce musical notation for optional use when those blessings are prayed.

The rite for use outside of Mass is largely the same as the rite within Mass, and there have not been significant changes to the structure of the rite in the second edition. However, the rite as it appears in the ritual should be a little more “user friendly,” as one of the options for the Nuptial Blessing is now included in place, and as the ritual now provides the full text for a Communion Rite (whereas the previous version only referred to these texts in the rubrics).

“The Order of Celebrating Matrimony between a Catholic and a Catechumen or a Non-Christian” is largely unchanged, and the new aspects of marriage rite described above are found here as well. Newly included, however, is the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer between the Prayer of the Faithful and the Nuptial Blessing.

Unlike the previous edition, the Order of Mass will not appear in ritual editions of the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony, Second Edition*, though the various options for the orations, blessings, and prefaces will continue to be printed. The choices available for the Scripture readings and psalms will also be included, as before.

Finally, there are three new appendices in the second edition, with the first of them providing sample versions of the Prayer of the Faithful. The second and third appendices are particularly noteworthy and pastorally useful: rites for “Blessing an Engaged Couple” and “Blessing a Married Couple within Mass on the Anniversary of Marriage.” Similar versions of these rites already appear in the Book of Blessings (nos. 195-214 and 94-106, respectively), but now they will be available in a translation similar in style to the Roman Missal.

Adaptations for the United States

The body of Bishops requested a total of five adaptations to the Order of Celebrating Matrimony, Second Edition, three of which were accepted by the Holy See. The first is an alternate form of the consent formula based on the Sarum Rite; the text will appear in both declarative and interrogative forms. For consistency with the form used in England and Wales, the phrase “to love and to cherish” has been added to this alternate form of consent.

Two cultural adaptations commonly used among Spanish-speaking communities were also accepted for optional use in Matrimony celebrations in English. The blessing and giving of arras (coins) between the bride and bridegroom symbolizes “the good gifts [the couple] will share” during their married life (OCM, nos. 67B, 101B). In addition, the blessing and imposition of either the lazo (a wedding cord or lasso) or the veil may take place before the Nuptial Blessing as “a symbol of the indissoluble union that [the couple] have established” (OCM, nos. 71B, 103B).

The Congregation did not accept two proposed adaptations, however. The first was a request for the option to move the Nuptial Blessing during Mass from its place after the Lord’s Prayer to after the Universal Prayer. The Holy See has asked, instead, that catechetical efforts emphasize the “significance of the Nuptial Blessing and the appropriateness of its being placed at such a climactic moment of the Mass, particularly by pointing out the rich connections between the Most Blessed Sacrament and the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.” The second proposed adaptation that was rejected was for the optional inclusion of the Litany of the Saints following the homily. The Congregation acknowledged the good intentions which motivated the request, but remarked that such a litany “must be seen as out of harmony with the structure of the marriage celebration through the centuries.”

Conclusion

Various liturgical publishers are expected to produce ritual editions of the Order of Celebrating Matrimony, Second Edition. The appearance of an English translation of the Ordo celebrandi matrimonium, editio typica altera has been anticipated for a long time, so it will be with some satisfaction that the new text will soon be published.

For additional information about the new Rite of Marriage that takes effect this Fall 2016, please visit USCCB.org.

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September 2015*