

Guide for The Order of Celebrating Matrimony [OCM] on a Saturday Evening

QUESTION: Are there liturgical implications for scheduling the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* with Mass on a Saturday evening?

SHORT ANSWER: Yes. The basic answer is in OCM 32, 34. Following the number in the *Table of Liturgical Days* is key. If the OCM is scheduled on a Saturday evening after the anticipated vigil Mass in Ordinary Time, then the Ritual *Mass for Matrimony* and its readings are used. But if the OCM is scheduled *during* a Saturday evening parish Mass in Ordinary Time, then the Mass of that Sunday is used. A Wedding Mass on a Saturday evening in Advent, Lent or Easter also uses the Sunday Mass Propers.

The *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* may be held after the anticipated vigil of Sunday in a parish. If the date is not a Mass in which the entire parish participates, nor one of the Universal Holy Days listed in the *Table of Liturgical Days According to their Order of Precedence* “[*Universal Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar* [Roman Missal], and if the Ritual *Mass for Matrimony* is celebrated with the Readings from the Lectionary for Mass, Vol IV for *Marriage*, this Mass fulfills the Sunday obligation of those Catholics who attend.

Canon 1248.1 of the Code of Canon Law states: *The precept of participating in the Mass is satisfied by assistance at a Mass which is celebrated anywhere in a Catholic rite either on the holy day or on the evening of the preceding day.* Therefore, if a wedding Mass is celebrated after the time allowed in a diocese for anticipated Masses of Sunday, one’s Sunday obligation is fulfilled.

If the date for the wedding Mass is on one of the Universal Holy Days, the Mass propers of that day must be used, [NOT the Ritual *Mass for Matrimony*] as well as the readings from the Lectionary for that day. One reading which explicitly speaks of Marriage may be substituted from the Lectionary for Mass, Volume IV #801-805.

LONGER ANSWER: Whenever Marriage is celebrated within Mass, the *Ritual Mass “The Celebration of Marriage”* found in the Roman Missal V is to be used with sacred vestments of the color white or of a festive color [OCM 34] Requisites which must be

prepared for Mass include the ritual text, rings, holy water and a chalice of sufficient size for *Communion Under Both Kinds* [OCM 38].

The Liturgy of the Word is celebrated in the usual manner [OCM 55]. There may be three Scripture readings. The First Reading is from the Old Testament, except during the fifty days of the Easter Season, when it is taken from the Book of Revelation [OCM 55] At least one reading, which explicitly speaks of Marriage, must always be chosen [OCM 55]

There are certain days during the liturgical year when the *Ritual Mass for the Celebration of Marriage* may not be used. These days are holy to the worldwide church. The Church observes them with greater solemnity. Other rites, including the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, are secondary to what we are universally observing that day. Thus, the *Mass of that Day* is celebrated, with the addition of the Nuptial Blessing and, if appropriate, the proper formula for the Final Blessing. The ritual *Mass for Matrimony* may not be celebrated, and the readings are taken from the Lectionary for Mass as prescribed for that day. However, one reading which explicitly speaks of Marriage may be substituted.

These solemn days are ranked as 1-through 4” in the “*Table of Liturgical Days According to their Order of Precedence*” [*Universal Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar*, 59] found in the Roman Missal.

These universal holy days may fall by calendar on a Saturday and would thus affect the Mass propers and the Lectionary choices for a wedding Mass. They are:

1. Easter Triduum of the Lord’s Pasion and Resurrection.
2. Christmas, Epiphany, Ascension, and Pentecost
Sundays [Saturday evenings] of Advent, Lent, and the Easter Season
Ash Wednesday
Weekdays of Holy Week [Monday- Thursday, inclusive]
Days within the Octave of Easter
3. Solemnities of the Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and saints listed in the General Calendar.
The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed [All Souls]
4. The solemnity of the principal patron of the place
The Solemnity of the dedication of the parish church
The Solemnity of the Title of a particular Church [Sacred Heart]
The Solemnity of the title, founder, or patron of a religious order

The following list might provide a simple, chronological list of those days on which the Ritual Mass is not used:

First Sunday of Advent	Easter Sunday
Second Sunday of Advent	Monday within the Octave of Easter
Immaculate Conception of the BVM [Dec 8]	Tuesday within the Octave of Easter
Third Sunday of Advent	Wednesday within the Octave of Easter
Fourth Sunday of Advent	Thursday within the Octave of Easter
Nativity of the Lord/ Christmas [Dec 25]	Friday within the Octave of Easter
Mary, the Holy Mother of God [Jan 1]	Saturday within the Octave of Easter
Epiphany of the Lord	Second Sunday of Easter /Sunday of Divine Mercy
Ash Wednesday	Third Sunday of Easter
First Sunday of Lent	Fourth Sunday of Easter
Second Sunday of Lent	Fifth Sunday of Easter
Third Sunday of Lent	Sixth Sunday of Easter
Fourth Sunday of Lent	Ascension of the Lord
Fifth Sunday of Lent	Pentecost
Saint Joseph, Spouse of the BVM [March 19]	The Most Holy Trinity
Annunciation of the Lord [March 25]	The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ
Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord	The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
Monday of Holy Week	Nativity of John the Baptist [June 24]
Tuesday of Holy Week	Saints Peter and Paul [June 29]
Wednesday of Holy Week	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary [August 15]
Thursday of Holy Week [day]	All Saints [November 1]
Holy Thursday	Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed [November 2]
Good Friday	Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe
Holy Saturday /Easter Vigil	

This order will be impacted by the date of Easter in any given year.

The liturgical season also governs the celebration: If a Marriage is celebrated on a day having a penitential character, especially during Lent, the pastor is to counsel the spouses to take into account the special nature of that day [OCM 32]

However, when the ritual Mass for *the Celebration of Marriage* is selected, some other liturgical elements will be impacted. For instance, if a wedding between two Catholics on a weekday in Advent, the *Glory to God* would be sung or said and the color of vestments would be white, not violet. But if a wedding between two Catholics on a Saturday evening in Advent, the *Glory to God* would NOT be sung or said, and the color of vestments would be violet, not white. The Mass Propers are for the Mass of that Advent Sunday.

Example Number One:

On Saturday, August 15th, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, before the anticipated Vigil, a wedding may be celebrated at Mass. However, all the Propers for the Solemnity must be used instead of the *Marriage* Mass Propers, e.g., *Collect [Opening Prayer], Prayer over the Gifts, Preface, Prayer after Communion*. For the Liturgy of the Word one of the three readings for the Assumption [Lectionary #622] may be replaced with a Marriage reading [Lectionary # 801-805], including the Gospel.

Example Number Two:

On Saturday evening after the anticipated Vigil Mass for the Epiphany, a wedding may be celebrated at Mass. However, all the Propers of the Epiphany must be used instead of the *Marriage* Mass Propers e.g., *Collect [Opening Prayer], Prayer over the Gifts, Preface, Prayer after Communion*. For the Liturgy of the Word, one of the three readings for the Epiphany [Lectionary #20] may be replaced with a marriage reading [Lectionary #801-805,] including the Gospel.

Example Number Three:

On a Saturday evening after the anticipated Vigil Mass for the Third Sunday of Ordinary Time, a wedding may be celebrated at Mass. All the Mass Propers for the *Mass for Matrimony* are to be used *Collect [Opening Prayer], Prayer over the Gifts, Preface, Prayer after Communion*. For the Liturgy of the Word the readings are taken from the Lectionary for Mass, Vol IV for Marriage, with one reading explicitly speaking about Marriage.