

PREPARING FOR YOUR WEDDING

INFORMATION BOOKLET



ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH

KYABRAM

Dear Friends,

Congratulations on your decision to marry! This decision is going to profoundly influence the rest of your life and as a priest/celebrant I want the best for you in your marriage relationship.

There is a special God given "high" or euphoria associated with this time and stage in your relationship and this is good.

Life experience teaches us that the closer we come to another person the more aware we become of our differences and this experience can be scary.

Your wedding day is going to be all the more special for you in so far as you have given serious thought so enriching your relationship before the wedding day so that you can confidently say yes to each other knowing that you have learnt skills to accommodate your differences and which enable you to continue to celebrate your love and commitment to each other even when that special "high" or euphoria begins to fade.

To help you prepare for your marriage I offer you this booklet.

Yours sincerely,

Fr Uday Marneni
Parish Priest



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PRELIMINARIES

Couples intending to enter marriage should personally notify a Priest of the Parish and arrange with him the date and time as early as possible. IDEALLY AT LEAST SIX MONTHS NOTICE SHOULD BE GIVEN but a longer period is better.

Your marriage, with God as its author, is of its very nature a holy union requiring of you a complete and unconditional giving of self.

This union is wonderfully unique because it will bind you together for life in a relationship so close and so intimate that it will profoundly influence your whole future.

In order to understand fully these responsibilities which go with the commitment to marry, both of you as a couple, will need to address the following:-

1. Marriage preparation.
2. Documentation for Church & State requirements,
3. Preparation of the Ceremony.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Marriage, one of the seven sacraments of the Church, requires proper and timely preparation. Marriage Preparation Courses are available and all couples intending to marry should attend one of the courses offered.

a) Review your relationship particularly your awareness of self and partner, your attitudes and expectations for marriage and the nature of a sacramental marriage. This is effectively achieved by FOCCUS pre-marriage inventory. FOCCUS enables you to quickly see for yourselves where your relationship is at on a number of issues. It is not a test to see if you should marry but an opportunity to acknowledge strengths and address problematic areas for when you attend a pre-marriage education program.

Couples will be required to do the FOCCUS as part of Marriage Preparation. Qualified facilitators of the program will take you through it. They can be contacted in Shepparton, Bendigo or online (see link below).

b) Marriage preparation programs are arranged to address these issues and should be attended as soon as possible after deciding to marry.

Brochures outlining these programmes are available with a brief outline of their value and structure. Couples are strongly encouraged to attend the specially arranged programmes.

Foccus website: <https://www.catholiccarevic.org.au/workshops/foccus/>

c) Marriage Preparation Books may also be used by the priest or a married couple, this will be carried out by sessions arranged by appointment. These sessions will also include some explanation of the Catholic faith.

When one partner is not a Catholic then the Church has an obligation to explain a basic understanding of the Catholic religion to the non-catholic partner. The partner is then aware of the responsibilities that the Catholic partner has accepted in having children of the marriage baptised and brought up with a practical response to faith and the Catholic religion.

A Catholic marriage requires that the couple promise to baptise the children in the Catholic Church.

DOCUMENTATION

Commonwealth & Church Mandatory Requirements

Complete the Australian Government and Diocesan forms necessary for the celebration of marriage according to the respective norms.

The "Intention of Marriage" Commonwealth form is required to be filled in and signed between the sixth and first months before the wedding.

Please provide the following certificates or papers:

- Birth Certificates or extracts: these are obtainable from the
- "Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages", GPO Box 4332, Melbourne Vic. 3001. or Ground floor 595 Collins St Melbourne 3001.
- Baptismal Certificate, Catholic and non-Catholic
- When applying for a Baptismal Certificate, apply in writing giving all details and include a stamped addressed envelope.
- Letter of Freedom - ask your own Parish Priest.
- Permission to Marry: if you are not a parishioner, ask your Parish Priest.
- For under 18 years old, consent from your parent will be required and a form needs to be completed.

THE CEREMONY

You, in association with the Priest celebrant, decide upon the type of Church ceremony you would like, whether it is a Nuptial Mass or the wedding ceremony by itself.

This includes the choice of scripture readings, prayers, who is to participate, the music and singing, etc., so that the wedding may be a most enjoyable, memorable celebration for yourselves as well as everyone present.

If you want a practice, it is held in the Church a day or two before the Wedding. You will also need to sign a Declaration: "Freedom to Marry" for Federal Law purposes a day or two prior to the wedding. The signing usually takes place at the wedding practice.

All books, handouts and Foccus reflections etc must be returned before this time if the wedding practice is to take place.

MIXED MARRIAGES

The Catholic partner in a marriage of mixed religion is required to sign a promise in order to seek permission to marry. It is "I reaffirm my faith in Jesus Christ and with God's help, I intend to continue living that faith in the Catholic Church. I promise to do all in my power to share the faith I have received with our children by having them baptised and brought up as Catholics. My partner has been informed of this promise that I have made." Under these circumstances it is not normal to have a Nuptial Mass but the couple are free to ask if they wish.

PUNCTUALITY

Marriage preparation is a professional situation the same as seeing a doctor, lawyer or a counsellor. So keeping appointments and punctuality are most important and must be respected.

WEDDING CHECK LIST

1. Marriage Preparation

- Pre Marriage Inventory / questionnaire (e.g.FOCCUS)
- Marriage Preparation Program
- Spiritual preparation.

2. Documentation

Each person will require to present:

- Full Birth Certificates.
- Baptismal Certificates, for both Catholic and Christians of other denominations.
- Date of Confirmation.
- Letter of Freedom - see your own Parish Priest.
- For those under 18 years old, a signed consent form from your parent/s. (Forms available from the priest)
- Death certificates of former spouse, Decree of nullity/dissolution, Decree of Divorce if applicable.

The couple will need to complete with the Priest:

- Notice of Intended Marriage (government)
- Two Marriage Declarations (government & diocesan)
- Form for permission or dispensation in cases of mixed marriages.
- Form for other dispensations from impediment if necessary.

3. The Ceremony

- Place, date and time.
- Rite of Marriage within or without Mass.
- The liturgy including scripture readings, prayers, participants, the music and singing, etc.

Practical Matters

- **Time of Ceremony:** It is most important that the ceremony commence at the time arranged so that other people and any ceremony that may follow will not be inconvenienced.
- **Witnesses:** Law requires two witnesses over the age of 18 to sign marriage certificates and the register.
- **Other Matters:** e.g. flowers, music, singing, confetti, videoing & photography, please consult the parish priest or the celebrant. See below.
- **Fees:** The booking for weddings of \$550.00 does not include the flowers. Further details on page 10.
- **Practice:** for the ceremony, if required, is to be arranged with the celebrant and the Church in which the marriage is to be celebrated.

FLOWERS

Church flowers for your wedding should be organised by yourselves. You will need to consult with Mary Zobec or Annette Ryan (Phone numbers are under Church arrangements) or the priest before going ahead and ordering.

PEW DECORATIONS

No decorations on the end of seats may be held with sticky tape or pinned. Please use blue tack or tie onto the seats.

CONFETTI

We will have the Church looking at its best for your wedding. We ask that you show consideration for others, especially any following weddings by advising your guests that confetti or rice etc. may not be thrown in the Church or the Church grounds.

ORGANIST / MUSICIAN

The use of music for weddings is highly recommended. If you require any assistance with this please contact Mary Zobec 0427 190 282.

SINGING

If there is to be singing by the congregation and /or soloist, the music chosen must be approved by the Parish Priest, Celebrant and organist. Appropriate music and hymns are available for you to make your choices. See the Parish Priest or Mary.

COPYRIGHT

Any music used by singer or organist has to comply with the copyright laws. If hymns are to be printed in the wedding booklet then they also must comply with copyright laws and guide-lines. The Kyabram Parish has taken out a licence cover with "OneLicence" and our licence is No A-640804.

WEDDING BOOKLET

You may wish to have a wedding booklet. This is a very practical way to involve the congregation, particularly when some guests maybe non-Catholic. The Priest will give you the necessary books for readings, prayers etc. Refer to page 10 for guide-lines.



FEES

All bookings for weddings will be \$550.00. This will include the costs of Wedding Information booklets, Pre-Marriage Instruction, Foccus details, Commonwealth and Church documentation and paper work, use of copyright licences, photocopying and use of the church for the practice and the wedding day. It does not include flowers or musician fees.

This fee is to be paid when the booking for the wedding is finalised and wedding preparations commence. Further costs after the wedding for cleaning etc due to confetti will be incurred by the couple.

There is no fixed fee charged by the Celebrant to officiate weddings; however, it is customary for the bride and groom to offer a token of appreciation. The amount is entirely at the couple's discretion. For reference, a Civil Marriage Celebrant typically charges over \$500, though such an amount is not expected here.

Couples should also be aware that the Priest dedicates many hours to preparing them for your marriage. Therefore, some form of compensation is appropriate. These arrangements should be finalised no later than the wedding rehearsal—not on the wedding day itself.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photography and video taping are permitted in the Church. It is important that they do not intrude on the celebration but serve as a valued record. Please inform the photographer to contact the celebrant beforehand.

PRESBYTERY PHOTOS

Seek permission if you wish to take photos around the presbytery. Inform the photographer to see the priest beforehand regarding format of photos. There will be no drinking in the presbytery grounds.

CHURCH ARRANGEMENTS

We have other options available to you regarding arranging the decor in the church. There are ladies who are willing to help in this area. You may wish to contact one.

Annette Ryan 0408 502 858

Mary Zobec 0427 190 282

GENERAL PLANNING

A. Ministries

You will need the cooperation of many people if your wedding is to run smoothly. The purpose of this section is to get an overview of some of these ministries.

Although the principal 'minister' of your wedding is the priest/celebrant, it is important to realise that the 'celebrant' of your marriage is **'you yourselves'**. You are the ones who **'celebrate'** your wedding.

As your guests arrive at the church it is important that they be welcomed, made to feel at home and introduced to other guests. It is difficult to find a suitable name for those who do this. Perhaps they would be the **'welcomers'**.

Once inside the church you will need **'ushers'** to show the guests to their place. Without 'ushers' people will tend to spread out all over the church or to sit in the back seats.

The people you invite to read the scriptures have a special role. As **'readers'** they will proclaim the Word of God for your guests. Make sure that your readers can read clearly. You will also need one or two people, the **'announcers'** of the prayers in the Prayer of the Faithful.

Your **musicians and singers** give a special character to your wedding. They will need to be given plenty of notice of your choice of music and songs.

Although everyone present is an **'attendant'**, some have a more formal role as official witnesses (e.g. best-man, bridesmaids, matron of honour etc.) These, like the others, have a 'ministry' to perform that is no more or less important than the others. You may consider alternative arrangements for locating them - perhaps remaining in the body of the church until their involvement is called for.

One of the most visible people at your wedding will be the **'photographer'**. The photographer has the potential to seriously disrupt your wedding. It is important, therefore, to choose wisely. With a little imagination it is possible to integrate the photographer into the action of the wedding so that he or she is seen to be part of the action, rather than an intrusion into it. Take time with your photographer so that he or she knows exactly what you want, and then insist on it. Work

out what you want to record and 'walk through' the ceremony to plan where the photographer will be how and when equipment will be changed etc. In this way your photographer will enhance rather than spoil your wedding.

B. Music

On your wedding day you will want everything done to speak to yourselves and to your guests of the meaning of this day: hope, happiness, joy, love, friendship, togetherness; above all, because you are Christians, you will want your day to speak about Jesus, his Father and his Holy Spirit. It is a wise move to consult the priest and parish music people in plenty of time to see what local directives need to be considered. Early checking can prevent misunderstandings and waste of time. In choosing music for your wedding the following questions may prove useful:

1. Will the words of your music express a Christian view of love? Will the words help the listeners to remember that your marriage is a religious event in which God is present? Will it help all present to pray?
2. Will the music and the words only remind people of recent movies, plays or popular radio songs?
3. Will the music you choose enable the guests to join in, or will they feel like spectators at a performance?
4. Will the music respect the spirit and purpose of the part of the celebration where it is? Will many of the guests be from another religious tradition? Is it possible to draw from their religious music also?
5. Will the musicians be competent? Semi-talented friends and relatives performing in a strange church with unfamiliar acoustics may prove an embarrassment to you and your guests.

The music that you may be thinking about for your wedding will probably fit into one of the following categories:

- a.** Music composed for use in church, or popular music which speaks directly of the religious dimension of love.
- b.** Popular music which does not speak of the religious dimension of love, or which refers only to the physical or emotional dimensions of love.

a. is acceptable, but b. is not. However, there is nothing to prevent b. being used at the reception or as the guests gather at the church before the actual ceremony begins.

C. Booklets

Personally prepared booklets enable all to participate more fully in the ceremony. They also make beautiful mementoes of your wedding day celebration. They say clearly that you count all your guests as important 'attendants' at your wedding.

The next question to ask is 'what should be put into our booklets?' The answer is - not everything that is said during the ceremony. Some elements of the wedding rite call for listening, others for reading or singing. A good guiding principle in choosing what to include is: will this help or hinder our guests to 'attend' the wedding more fully?

Response and songs and prayers to be prayed by all should be included. The scripture readings are meant to be listened to. It is preferable to include scripture references only and perhaps a line of introduction rather than the full scripture texts. The marriage vows could be included as a special record.

A personally written message of welcome makes a good introduction. Perhaps you could list all those who are performing special ministries during the rite. Covers for the booklet can be designed by talented friends or bought ready-made at most large Christian bookshops.

It is also necessary to ensure that the necessary copyright permissions are obtained for the words and music of the wedding ceremony that you reprint.

D. Overall Characteristics

Finally before you begin to plan individual details of the ceremonies it is helpful to get a sense of what it could be, overall. If you work through these three areas with your priest/celebrant you will get that overall sense, and you can then come back to it as a point of referral further down the line. The areas to consider are:

1. What we **don't** want our wedding to be;
2. What we **do** hope it will be;
3. Our **STATEMENT OF INTENTION** about our wedding.

1. What we don't want

You have attended some marriages that did not appeal to you at all or left you cold. Recall them and try to put your finger on what was wrong.

Characteristics

e.g. boring

Reasons

Perhaps because I did not know the ceremony - where things fitted in, what were the important bits, etc.

Also I wasn't involved in any way.
I had turned up because he was a friend at work, but had no 'job' to do, to prepare for.

And the service was dead - the priest didn't seem to take much care about the whole thing.

What we do hope it will be

You don't want your wedding to have those negative qualities; with good planning you can avoid them.

On the other hand, there are a whole lot of things that you would **like** your wedding to be.

Characteristics

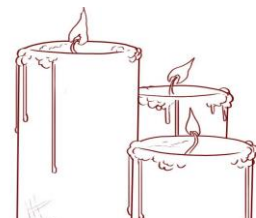
Eg. Warm and friendly

This will happen if

We make sure everyone is personally greeted as they arrive (get your families to help here).

We could have a sign of peace at the beginning, making sure "his" and "her" guests get to cross the aisle and greet and meet each other.

We could have a warm, personal "letter" from us inside the cover of the wedding booklets. *Etc*



CANDLE CEREMONY

Three candles are placed on the altar. The two outside candles represent the two families and the family name is on each. The centre candle has the names of the couple and is their candle.

At the beginning of the ceremony the celebrant invites the two mothers to light their family candles. After the wedding vows, the couple light a taper from their family candles and light their candle together.

OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE RITE FOR CELEBRATING MARRIAGE OUTSIDE MASS

Gathering Together

Entrance Rite



Entrance Song
Greeting
Candle Ceremony (optional)
Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word



1st Reading
Responsorial Psalm
2nd Reading
Gospel Acclamation
GOSPEL
Homily

Liturgy of the Sacrament



Giving of Consent
Blessing and Exchange of Rings
Candle Ceremony (optional)
General Intercessions
Nuptial Blessing

Conclusion

Lord's Prayer
Solemn Blessing
Signing the Register

OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE RITE FOR CELEBRATING MARRIAGE DURING MASS

Gathering Together

Entrance Rite

Entrance Song
Greeting
Candle Ceremony (optional)
Penitential Rite
Lord, have mercy
Glory to God
Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word

1st Reading
Responsorial Psalm
2nd Reading
Gospel Acclamation
GOSPEL
Homily

Liturgy of the Sacrament

Giving of Consent
Blessing and Exchange of Rings
Candle Ceremony (optional)
General Intercessions

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Gifts
Prayer over the Gifts
Eucharistic Prayer
Lord's Prayer
Nuptial Blessing
Sign of Peace
Communion
Prayer after Communion
Solemn Blessing
Signing the Register

Conclusion

General Intercessions (1)

The general intercessions (prayer of the faithful) follow, using formulas approved by the Conference of Bishops.

P: My dear friends, let us ask God to blessand in their marriage and unite them in love through his Holy Spirit.

Grant that their married love may reflect your saving love for the human family.

Lord, hear us

R: Lord, hear our prayer

Unite them in love and fidelity as Christ is united with his Church.

Lord, hear us

R: Lord, hear our prayer.

Through your Holy Spirit, may they grow into a community of love and show that your Church is present within their home.

Lord, hear us.

R: Lord, hear our prayer.

Through loving one another in Christ, may they come to love Christ in their neighbour.

Lord, hear us

R: Lord, hear our prayer.

May the Church bring salvation to the world by expressing Christ's love for all people.

Lord, hear us

R: Lord, hear our prayer.

Grant that all Christians may radiate the joy of living in Christ.

Lord, hear us

R: Lord, hear our prayer.

Priest: Father, you have made Christian marriage the sign of the unity between Christ and his Church. Hear our prayers for N. and N. May they love one another as Christ loves his Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen



*His love
has no end*

General intercessions (2)

Priest: My dear friends, let us pray to the Lord that he will make known to and the riches of their vocation in marriage.

Grant them the gift of your Holy Spirit that their lives may be lived in love.

Lord, hear us

R: Lord, hear our prayer.

Help them to make a home together, and grace it with hospitality, friendship and prayer.

Lord, hear us

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Make their love and expression of your creative love, and bless them with children.

Lord, hear us.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

OR

Make their love an expression of your saving love for everyone.

Lord, hear us

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

May they minister the grace of marriage to each other in their joys and sorrows, in their hopes and disappointments.

Lord, hear us.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Grant that the Church may reveal to the world your love for the human family.

Lord, hear us.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Priest: Father, you are a God of love, and through your Son you have taught us to love one another. May and in their marriage take Christ's love into the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS (3)

Priest: My dear friends, let us pray to our Father in heaven that he will bless N. and N. throughout their married life, and that he will keep them united in undivided love.

May they always love one another as Christ loves his Church.

Lord, hear us.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

May they, in their marriage, listen to Christ's Gospel and pray together.

Lord, hear us.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Through the joys and sacrifices of their marriage, listen to Christ's Gospel and pray together.

Lord, hear us.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Fulfill in their family the Christian hope for peace on earth.

Lord, hear us.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Renew the grace of marriage in all Christian families, and redeem human love from selfishness and indifference.

Lord, hear us.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

May all Christians witness your gospel of love and offer hospitality to Christ when he comes to them in the form of a stranger.

Lord, hear us.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Priest: Father, you are love itself, and you have made man and woman in your likeness. Hear our prayers for N. and N. May they bring your love for others throughout the years of their marriage. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS (4)

Priest: My dear friends, let us ask God to bless and in their marriage and to keep them united in their covenant of love.

Help them to fulfill their human and Christian vocation in marriage.

Lord, hear us.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Through their love for each other, may they give witness to your eternal covenant of love with the human family.

Lord, hear us.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Make them faithful as you are faithful, and lead them to holiness through success and failure.

Lord, hear us.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Increase their faith that they may see the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection in their life.

Lord, hear us.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Bless their parents, friends and all who are here.

Lord, hear us.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

May all Christians be faithful to the command of your covenant and love one another as Christ has loved them.

Lord, hear us.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Grant peace to the world, and help the members of the human family to live for each other.

Lord, hear us.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Priest: Father, in the new covenant of Christ you have given us the pledge of your eternal love and fidelity. Hear our prayers for N. and N. May they mirror your love and reflect your fidelity in their married life.. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **R.** Amen.

CHOOSING MUSIC FOR YOUR WEDDING

CATEGORY A

The music listed in this category has lyrics that express a truly Christian view of marriage, and is in agreement with the liturgical directives for Catholic weddings. They are taken from the most commonly used books in Australia. The list is by no means exhaustive.

Living Worship Hymnal - *Brisbane Liturgical Commission*

All That I Am
Amazing Grace
A New Commandment
God Gives His People Strength
God Is Love
Go Tell Everyone
Prayer Of St. Francis
St. Patrick's Breastplate
Take My Hand
The Spirit Of God
Where True Love
With A Joyful Heart
With You



Glory and Praise - *North American Liturgy Resources*

Volume 1

Be Not Afraid
Earthen Vessels
For You Are My God
Like A Seal On Your Heart
Peace Is Flowing Like A River
Peace Prayer
Praise The Lord
Sing A New Song
Though The Mountains May Fall
Yahweh, The Faithful One
You Are Near

Volume 2

All Our Joy
The Cry Of The Poor
Come To The Water
I Have Loved You
On Eagle's Wings
One Bread, One Body
Remember Your Love
Trust In The Lord

Volume 3

All I Ask Of You
All The Ends Of The Earth
Beginning Today
City Of God
Lift Up Your Hearts
We Thank You Father
Wherever You Go
Yahweh



Eagle's Wings - *Chevalier Press*

Be Still, My Friends	My Soul Is Joyful
Come To The Water	Renewal Song
Deep In The Spirit	Strong And Constant
Eagle's Wings	The Fullness Of God
Hymn To Christ	The Wonders He Has Done For You
In God Alone	The Eucharist Song
I Thank My God	Trinity Song
Living Water	This Blessing Cup
Morning Praise	Zephaniah's Song

CATEGORY B

In this category are titles which are not acceptable for use at the wedding ceremony. They may be suitable at the reception or played by the musicians to accompany the dancing at the reception. The texts of these songs do not display the basic characteristics of Christian love, that is, self-giving love which goes beyond the physical and emotional level. It is Christian love, a reflection of God's love for us, his people, that is celebrated in the marriage ceremony.

Annie's Song (Denver)
And I Love You So
Brian's Song (Hands of Time)
Close To You
First Time I Saw Your Face
Hawaiian Wedding Song
I Just Fall In Love Again
If Ever I Would Leave You
Let It Be
Love Story - theme
Speak Softly Love (Godfather)
What The World Needs Now



Without Your Love
Yesterday
You Are The Sunshine of My Life
You Light Up My Life

Again, this list is not exhaustive. Any list would immediately be out of date. You should work with the priest and the musician in the spirit of these guidelines rather than searching for loop-holes.

WHERE TO ENHANCE THE CEREMONY WITH MUSIC AND SONG

a) As the guests gather

Instrumental or vocal selections will set the mood as the guests gather.

Be careful what you choose here.

b) Entrance

The entry of the bride usually makes congregational singing here difficult. The Entrance song could be sung by a soloist, or the song is begun after the wedding party has reached the altar.

c) Responsorial Psalm

The rhythm of word-song, listening-singing, is important here. It is easy to get people to sing a short refrain (response) while the soloist sings the verses.

d) Gospel Acclamation

It is also easy to sing the "alleluia" before the Gospel. The soloist would sing it first, everyone would repeat it, then the soloist would sing the verse before the gospel. Finally all would repeat "alleluia".

e) The Rite of Marriage

There are places after the giving of consent and during the candle ceremony (if it is used) when music would be appropriate as long as the music does not unduly delay the ceremony.

f) Nuptial Mass

i) Presentation of gifts. A solo, or instrumental music here can help.

ii) Eucharistic acclamations (Holy, Memorial, Amen) should be sung whenever possible. Your musicians will give some suggested music.

iii) Communion. Because this is the time for sharing the Eucharist singing is especially appropriate.

Blessing for Marriage

May your marriage bring you all the exquisite excitement marriage should bring,
and may life grant you also patience,
tolerance, and understanding.

May you always need one another –
not so much to fill your emptiness
as to help you to know your fullness.
A mountain needs a valley to be complete;
the valley does not make
the mountain less, but more;
and the valley is more a valley because
it has a mountain towering over it.

May you need one another, but not out of weakness.
May you want one another, but not out of lack.
May you entice one another, but not compel one another.
May you embrace one another, but not out encircle one another.
May you succeed in all important ways with one another,
and not fail in the little graces.
May you look for things to praise, often say, "I love you!"
and take no notice of small faults.

If you have quarrels that push you apart,
may both of you hope to have
good sense enough to take the first step back.

May you enter into the mystery which is
the awareness of one another's
presence - no more physical than spiritual,
warm and near when you are
side by side, and warm and near when
you are in separate rooms
or even distant cities.

May you have happiness,
and may you find it making one another happy.
May you have love, and may you find it
loving one another.



James Dillet Freeman

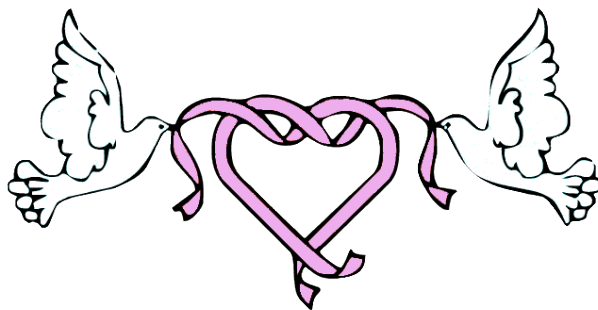
A MARRIAGE BLESSING

Bless this marriage,

*as and begin their journey
down the road of life together. May they respect each other's
likes and dislikes, opinions and beliefs,
hopes and dreams, and fears even though they may not always
understand each other.*

*May they rest in the knowledge that no matter what happens
by holding on to each other things will work out for the best.
Most of all, dear God, help them to keep the torch of love
burning with the fire that they now share in their hearts.*

Amen.





WEDDING RINGS ARE A SYMBOL OF THE
UNBROKEN CIRCLE OF LOVE. LOVE
FREELY GIVEN HAS NO BEGINNING AND NO
END, NO GIVER AND NO RECEIVER FOR
EACH IS THE GIVER AND EACH IS THE
RECEIVER. MAY THESE RINGS ALWAYS
REMIND YOU OF THE VOWS YOU HAVE
TAKEN.

