

SECTION F

LITURGY

Try it another way

Getting started

Quite often, when you think of your arrival at the church and the march down the aisle you feel quite sick at being on parade 'before all those people'. But if YOU feel terrified and on edge then everybody will feel a bit uncomfortable and anxious. So do all you can to make your arrival as pleasant and natural as possible - after all, 'all those people' are your best friends and closest relations, who want to make this wedding the happiest occasion they've ever shared with you.

How you actually arrive is the first thing in the service you can choose. Will one of your worries be that the other partner won't be there? Then meet outside and come in together, arm in arm. Might you be afraid of a church full of people with their backs towards you? Then ask them to turn round and give you a welcoming smile as you pass them (the priest can explain this to them before the start of the service) - or get everyone to gather outside and all march in together, to some cheerful music of one kind or another. If the wedding begins in an atmosphere of relaxed warmth, friendliness and affection, then the whole service will take on this particular glow.

From: **Preparing Your Marriage Service**, Catholic Truth Society

Which way round?

Do you want your guests to see more of bride and groom than their backs? Try facing each other, sideways on to the priest, who faces the congregation as usual.

Do you and your priest want to make it clear to the guests that bride and groom are ministers of the sacraments of marriage to each other? Then stand together facing the people in the minister's place, while the priest faces you at the front of his congregation.

A shared life

In some countries bride and groom each hold lighted candles, symbolising their individual lives. After they have made their vows they use these candles to light a larger marriage candle, and then blow out their individual flames.

A fair exchange

Both partners, not just the bride, may be 'given away' by their families and friends. And later they may exchange the Sign of Peace with their in-laws, their new family and friends.

MEANING OF MARRIAGE

Let us ask God to give us the gift of that love described by St. Paul.

LOVE IS PATIENT, LOVE IS KIND

Oh God, help us to be patient and kind to each other, even when we are foolish and silly and annoying, grant that we may never refuse to forgive each other.

Lord hear us.

LOVE IS NOT JEALOUS OR BOASTFUL

Save us Lord from the crippling cancer of a jealousy or envy that could blight our love and affection for each other; help us always to rejoice in each other's joy, to praise rather than condemn, to think of each other at our best rather than at our worst.

Lord hear us.

LOVE IS NOT ARROGANT OR RUDE

Lord make us at all times courteous and gentle; may the peace of Christ always dwell in our hearts and in our homes.

Lord hear us.

LOVE DOES NOT INSIST ON ITS OWN WAY, IT DOES NOT TAKE OFFENCE AND IS NOT RESENTFUL

Save us from the curse of self-pity, from complaining, grumbling and moaning; help us not to be difficult to live with, but to take things as they come; give us a sense of humour, the ability to laugh even when the situation does not warrant it.

Lord hear us.

LOVE DOES NOT REJOICE AT WRONG, BUT REJOICES IN THE RIGHT

Lord help us never to find pleasure in anything wrong, but to find happiness only in doing right, and in helping others to do it.

Lord hear us.

LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS, BELIEVES ALL THINGS, HOPES ALL THINGS, ENDURES ALL THINGS

Lord help us to bear all difficulties, and never to grow bitter, never to despair, however dark and difficult and discouraging life may be; help us to believe that tomorrow can always be a better day, and that you Lord can write straight even with our most crooked lines.

Lord hear us.

MAY WE ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT MARRIAGE IS A SHARING AND A CARING, A GIVING AND FORGIVING, A LOVING AND BEING LOVED, A WALKING HAND IN HAND, AND A TALKING HEART TO HEART: ALWAYS TRUSTING AND BELIEVING, AND THANKING GOD FOR EACH OTHER.

AMEN

'Sarum' formulas of blessing

'Sarum' formula for the blessing of food and drink:

Lord and Saviour of the world,
bless this food and drink,
as you blessed five loaves in the desert
and six waterports in Cana of Galilee
so that all who taste of them
may enjoy health, moderation and integrity.

'Sarum' formula for the blessing of the bedroom:

Lord, bless this bedroom and all who will sleep here,
that they may abide in your peace, persevere in your will,
and live, grow and increase in length of days.

'Sarum' formula for the blessing of the couple in the home:

May the Lord bless you, your souls and your bodies,
as he once blessed Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
May his hand be over you,
and may he send you his holy angel
to protect you all the days of your life.
