

THE TRADITIONAL AND NOVEL RITES OF MATRIMONY A COMPARISON

Certain sacraments in the Novel Rite differ so thoroughly from those in the Traditional Rite that a side-by-side comparison is difficult. Matrimony does present some of these difficulties. It is worth noting that, like most of the sacraments in the Novel Rite, matrimony is encouraged to occur during a Mass, typically right after the homily. However, in the Traditional Rite, matrimony occurs before the Mass; the husband and wife then attend their first Mass together immediately thereafter, a Nuptial Mass, which includes special blessings and ceremonies. Due to this difference, we are comparing the Novel Rite's ceremonies for matrimony outside of the Mass; hence the presence of a "Liturgy of the Word", which during a Mass would occur in its normal place instead.

Throughout, note the systematic removal of references to wifely submission, as well as the primary end of marriage as the procreation of children. Doubtlessly no one will be surprised by the deemphasis, or even elimination, of such things. In the Traditional Rite, the required readings at a Nuptial Mass are Ephesians 5 (the relationship between husband and wife) and Matthew 19 (that marriage is indissoluble); while both are commonly denied doctrines in the modern world, they are placed front-and-center at every Traditional Rite Nuptial Mass. They are options, of course, in the Novel Rite, but it is a rare Novel Rite marriage which selects either.

While there are many options here, as in all the Novel Rite sacraments, we have always chosen the most traditional one available.

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THE NOVEL RITE

ORDO CELEBRANDI MATRIMONIO SINE MISSA

As in so many places, the Novel Rite must have options. Here there are blessedly only two; we have selected the first. The differences between this and the other are minor, and relate to whether there will be a procession.

Here, as usual, we see the Novel Rite's obsession with greetings;

MODUS PRIOR

Statuto tempore, sacerdos, indutus alba, vel superpelliceo, et stola alba vel festiva, vel etiam pluviali (aut dalmatica pro diacono) eiusdem coloris, comitantibus ministrantibus, accedit ad ianuam ecclesiae, nupturientes recipit eosque humaniter salutat, significans Ecclesiam in eorum gaudio partem ha-

THE ORDER OF CELEBRATING MATRIMONY WITHOUT MASS

FIRST METHOD

At the appointed time, the priest, wearing an alb or surplice, with a stole either white or the feast's color, or even in a cope (or a dalmatic for a deacon) of the same color, accompanied by the ministers, approaches the door of the church, receives those to be married, and greets them in a friendly manner, showing that the Church has a part in their joy.

THE TRADITIONAL RITE

RITE OF CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

they must greet the bride and groom "humanly" (which we have translated here as "in a friendly manner"). This is followed by the again usual "[o]r other suitable words", so that the Novel Rite actually requires nothing and permits complete ad-libbing on the part of the celebrant.

RITUS CELEBRANDI MATRIMONII SACRAMENTUM

In the parish where the Matrimony will occur, publication having been made as has been said, if no legitimate impediment of the Church prevents it, then putting on a surplice and white stole, and at least one server clad similarly in a surplice, he brings the book and a vessel of blessed water with a sprinkler. There must be at least two witnesses present. The man and woman kneel before the altar; it is fitting that their parent or relatives present be honored. He questions them on their consent in Matri-

monio adfuturus, publicationibus factis ut dictum est, si nullum obster legitimum impedimentum in ecclesia, superpelliceo et stola alba indutus, adhibito uno saltem Clerico superpelliceo pariter induto, qui librum et vas aquae benedictae cum aspersorio deferat, coram duobus saltem testibus,

bere.

Deinde fit processio ad altare: præcedunt ministrantes, sequitur minister, deinde nupturientes, quos iuxta consuetudines locorum saltem parentes et duo testes honorifice comitari possunt ad locum ipsis præparatum. Interim fit cantus ad introitum.

Minister ad altare accedit, ipsumque salutat profunda inclinatione et osculo veneratur. Postea sedem petit.

Tunc, facto signo crucis, adstantes salutat, dicens:

Gratia vobis et pax a Deo Patre et a Domino nostro Iesu Christo.

Vel alia apta verba e Sacris Scripturis præsertim de prompta.

Omnes respondent:

Et cum spiritu tuo.

Vel:

Benedictus Deus in sæcula.

Vel alio apto modo.

Deinde nupturientes et adstantes alloquitur, ut eorum animos ad Matrimonium celebrandum disponat, his vel similibus verbis:

The Novel Rite now feels a need, as it does in all the sacramental liturgies but for the Mass, to tell us what we are about to do. Presumably, of course, the bride and groom are fully aware that they are coming to get married, so it's hard to see why this is necessary. The rubrics in the Novel Rite say this is "to dispose their souls for the celebration of Matrimony"; but surely it's a bit late for that, isn't it? In any case, the celebrant may, as always, use "these or similar words", so his catechesis here, already grossly misplaced, may well be grossly wrong, as well, and yet still be totally in accord with the liturgy.

Even the catechesis that is suggested by the Novel Rite is wrong, or at least grossly incomplete. It notes that the hour is important to the bride and groom (true, of course); asks the people there to pray for them; asks the people to hear the Word of God attentively; and asks

Ad hanc celebrationem peragendam, fratres carissimi, in domum Domini exultan-

Then there is a procession to the altar; the ministers go first, followed by the minister, then those to be married, whom according to the customs of the place may be honorably accompanied by at least their parents and two witnesses to a place prepared for them. Meanwhile there is a song for the entrance.

The minister approaches the altar, and he salutes it with a deep bow and venerates it with a kiss. Then he finds a seat.

Then, the sign of the Cross having been made, he greets those present, saying:

Grace to you, and peace from God the Father and Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Or other suitable words, especially prompted by Sacred Scripture.

All answer:

And with thy spirit.

Or:

Blessed be God forever.

Or in some other appropriate way.

Then he speaks to those to be married and those present, that he might dispose their souls for the celebration of Matrimony, in these or similar words:

mony, each individually in this way, in the vulgar tongue:

virum et mulierem ante altare genuflexos, quos parentum vel propinquorum suorum præsentia cohonestari decet, de consensu in Matrimonio interroget, utrumque singillatim in hunc modum vulgari sermone:

God "bless them and make them always one". But there is so much more to matrimony than that; indeed, the unification of the couple is a secondary end, after the procreation and education of children. Though this prayer allegedly exists to dispose the parties for the sacrament, it nowhere actually mentions the primary end of the sacrament. Indeed, the Novel Rite only twice mentions the primary end of the sacrament as an end, in the consent and the Nuptial Blessing. But in the request for consent, it is made secondary rather than primary, and in the Nuptial Blessing the text is optional! We shall see more about this as we come to these parts of the liturgy; but is it any wonder that Catholics today are totally uninformed about matrimony's purpose?

We have come together rejoicing in the house of the Lord, most beloved brethren, for per-

tes convenimus, N. et N. circumstantes in die qua domum suam condere intendunt. Illis vero hora hæc singularis est momenti. Quapropter animi affectu nostraque amicitia necnon oratione fraterna eis assistamus. Verbum quod Deus nobis hodie loquitur una cum eis attente audiamus. Deinde cum Ecclesia sancta, per Christum Dominum nostrum, Deum Patrem suppliciter deprecemur, ut hos famulos suos nupturientes benignus suscipiat, benedicat unumque semper faciat.

Duo aliae optiones pro hac oratione substituentur. —Ed.

We have often noted that the Novel Rite, rather than running Scripture everywhere in its liturgy, often chooses to put great blobs of it in the middle. This is an example of that tendency. Of course, there are many options to be chosen from, and some are barely even tangentially related to marriage; indeed, the Novel Rite must mention

forming this celebration. N. and N., standing around on the day in which they intend to found their home. To them, indeed, this particular hour is important. Wherefore, let us assist them with our disposition of soul and with our friendship and fraternal prayer. The Word which God speaks to us today, let us hear attentively together with them. Then, with the holy Church, through Christ Our Lord, let us supplicating pray to God the Father, that He kindly receive these, His servants about to be married, and bless them and make them always one.

Two other options may be substituted for this prayer. —Ed.

that “at least one reading [must] always be chosen which explicitly speaks about Matrimony”! Perhaps, then, the readings should simply be prescribed, so that we don’t need to worry about people choosing inappropriate texts?

LITURGIA VERBI

Sequitur liturgia verbi, more consueto, textibus assumptis qui supra in n. 56 proponuntur vel aliis e lectio-nibus, quæ infra indicantur (nn. 179–222).

Semper eligatur saltem una lectio quæ explicite de Matrimonio loquitur.

The Novel Rite leaves space here for a homily, and even tells the minister what to preach about—yet still doesn’t tell him to preach about the primary end of marriage! It is no good to say that the instruction here assumes such preaching, because the instruction is quite explicit when it wants to be; note that the minister is explicitly instructed to

Deinde minister in homilia e textu sacro exponit mysterium Matrimonii christiani, dignitatem amoris coniugalis, gratiam sacramenti et munera coniugum, attendendo tamen ad diversa personarum adiuncta.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The liturgy of the Word follows, according to custom, with texts chosen as proposed above in n. 56, or others from the readings which are indicated below (nn. 179–222).

Let at least one reading always be chosen which explicitly speaks about Matrimony.

Then the minister in his homily explains the mystery of Christian Matrimony from the sacred text, as well as the dignity of conjugal love, the grace of the sacrament, and the conjugal gifts, by applying it, however, to the different joinings of persons.

preach about “the dignity of conjugal love, the grace of the sacrament, and the conjugal gifts”. Why is he not instructed explicitly, then, to preach about the primary purpose of the sacrament, about which this whole ceremony is built?

CELEBRATIO MATRIMONII

Si duo vel plura Matrimonia simul celebrari contingat, semper tum interrogationes ante consensum, tum consensus ipse, tum etiam consensus receptio singulariter fiant pro singulis Matrimoniis; reliqua vero, ipsa benedictione nuptiali haud exclusa, semel pro cunctis plurali numero proferantur.

Omnibus stantibus, etiam nupturientibus, testibus hinc inde dispositis, minister, his vel similibus verbis, nupturientes alloquitur:

This “dearly beloved” prayer is cribbed very closely from the Anglican prayer. It is totally absent from the Traditional Rite, and always has been. Once again, the primary end of the whole ceremony is mostly ignored; there is merely an oblique reference which might be argued

Dilectissimi nobis, in domum ecclesiae convenistis, ut voluntas vestra Matrimonium contrahendi coram Ecclesia ministro et communitate sacro sigillo a Domino muniat. Amorem vestrum coniugalem Christus abunde benedicit et ad mutuam perpetuamque fidelitatem et ad cetera Matrimonii officia assumenda eos peculiari ditat et roborat Sacramento, quos ipse sancto iam Baptismate consecravit. Quare vos coram Ecclesia de mente vestra interrogo.

In the Traditional Rite, consent is only requested and received once,

THE CELEBRATION OF MATRIMONY

If two or more marriages are being celebrated at once, then the questions are always posed prior to the agreement, then the agreement itself, then also the agreement is given individually for each marriage; the remaining things, the nuptial blessing not excluded, are given once for all of the plural number.

To all present, even those to be married, to the witnesses who are ready, the minister, in these or similar words, addresses those to be married:

Dearly beloved, you have come together in the house of the Church, that your will to contract Matrimony before a minister of the Church and the community be fortified with the sacred seal by the Lord. Christ abundantly blesses your conjugal love and, for your joint and perpetual fidelity and for the assumption of the other duties of Matrimony, enriches you and helps you by these particular sacrament, whom He has consecrated already by holy baptism. Therefore, I ask you about your intention before the Church.

to refer to it, “the other duties of Matrimony”. Although, of course, “similar words” may be used, so perhaps a celebrant could insert something appropriate.

as we shall see. The questioning is doubled up in the Novel Rite.

INTERROGATIONES ANTE CONSENSUM

Tunc minister eos interrogat de libertate, de fidelitate et de suscipienda et educanda prole atque singuli respondent.

QUESTIONS BEFORE CONSENT

Then the minister asks them about their freedom, their fidelity, and their taking and education of children, and each one responds.

Note here the inversion of the ends of marriage. In Catholic theology, marriage has three purposes: (1) the procreation and education of children; (2) the unification and sanctification of the spouses; and (3) a remedy for the concupiscence of the flesh. In that order.

In the Novel Rite, the bride and groom are questioned regarding their acceptance of these ends in the wrong order; they are asked first about the secondary end, and only then about the primary. This

N. et N., venistisne huc sine coactione, sed libero et pleno corde ad Matrimonium contrahendum?

Estisne parati, Matrimonii viam sequentes, ad vos mutuo diligendos et honorandos, totius vitae decursu?

Interrogatio sequens omitti potest si adiuncta hoc inuunt, ex. gr. si nupturientes sunt atatis provecæ.

Estisne parati ad prolem amanter a Deo suscipiendam, et ad eam secundum legem Christi eiusque Ecclesiæ educandam?

The Novel Rite, after receiving consent from the bride and groom, proceeds to do so again; however, first it tells them that they'll have to express that consent in a moment.

CONSENSUS

Minister eos invitatur ut consensum expriment:

Cum igitur sancti Matrimonii foedus inire intendatis, dexteram iungite et coram Deo eiusque Ecclesia consensum vestrum exprimit.

Dexteram iungunt.

Vir dicit: Ego N. accipio te N. in uxorem meam et promitto me tibi fidem servaturum, inter prospera et adversa, in ægra et in sana valetudine, ut te diligam et honorem omnibus diebus vitæ meæ.

Mulier dicit: Ego N. accipio te N. in maritum meum et promitto me tibi fidem servaturam, inter prospera et adversa, in ægra et in sana va-

N. and N., do you come here without coercion, but freely and with full heart to contract Matrimony?

And are you ready, entering the life of Matrimony, to mutually love and honor one another, through the course of your whole life?

The following question may be omitted if those joined beckon it; for example, if those to be married are of advanced age.

Are you read to lovingly receive children from God, and educate them according to the law of Christ and of His Church?

CONSENT

The minister invites them to express their consent.

Since, therefore, you intend to enter into the pact of holy Matrimony, join your right hands, and express your consent before God and His Church.

They join their right hands.

The man says: I, N., receive thee N., as my wife, and I promise that I will faithfully watch over thee, among prosperity and adversity, in sickness and in health, that I might love thee and honor thee all the days of my life.

The woman says: I, N., receive thee N., as my husband, and I promise that I will faithfully watch over thee, among prosperity and adversity, in sickness and

inversion of ends has been a constant problem in the post-Vatican II Church, and changes in ceremony like this one must be considered a big reason why.

Still, we must be grateful that the primary end of marriage was finally inserted into the ceremony at all. Given the amount of this ceremony that is taken up with catechesis, this seems inadequate; but it is better than nothing.

In the Traditional Rite, this is the consent: the bride and groom both acknowledge what they are doing, and that they wish it to be done in accordance with the laws and rites of the Church.

And first, he asks the groom: N. Doſt thou wish to receive N., here present, as thy lawful wife, according to the rite of Holy Mother Church?

The groom responds: I so wish.

Then the priest questions the bride: N. Doſt thou wish to receive N., here present, as thy lawful husband, according to the rite of Holy Mother Church?

Et primo quidem ſponſum interroget: N. Vis accipere N. hic præſentem in tuam legitimam uxorem juxta ritum sanctæ matris Ecclesiæ?

Reſpondeat ſponſus: Volo. Mox Sacerdos ſponſam interroget: N. Vis accipere N. hic præſentem in tuum legitimum maritum juxta ritum sanctæ matris Ecclesiæ?

letudine, ut te diligam et honorem omnibus diebus vite meæ.

in health, that I might love thee and honor thee all the days of my life.

In hoc loco, alia optio pro consensu in qua minister virum et mulierem interrogat vota supra substituentur. —Ed.

At this place, another option for the consent, in which the minister asks the man and woman their vows, can be substituted for the above. —Ed.

The Novel Rite has already had the couple join hands, at the exchange of vows. The Traditional Rite emphasizes that while the exchange of vows is the administration of the Sacrament, for baptized Catholics it requires the consent of the Church, as well, and that it is the con-

The bride responds: I so wish.

The consent of one does not suffice, but it ought to be the consent of both, and expressed in words if they are able to speak, or otherwise by some equivalent signs, either done themselves or by an agent.

Respondeat sponsa: Volo.

Nec sufficit consensus unius, sed debet esse amborum, et expressus verbis, si loqui possint, aut secus æquipollentibus signis, sive fiat per se, sive per procuratorem.

sent of the Church that finalizes it. Therefore, they do not join their own hands; the priest joins them, and he does so when he affirms their vows here.

RECEPTIO CONSENSUS

RECEIPT OF CONSENT

Deinde minister excipiens consensum dicit sponsis:

Then the minister receiving the consent says to the spouses:

Hunc vestrum consensum, quem coram Ecclesia manifestastis, Dominus benigne confirmet et benedictionem suam in vobis implere dignetur. Quod Deus coniungit, homo non separet.

May the Lord kindly confirm this, your consent, which you have shown before the Church, and see fit to pour His blessing into you. What God has joined, let man not separate.

In loco oratione supra, alia oratio substituetur. —Ed.

In the place of the above pray, another prayer may be substituted. —Ed.

Minister ad Dei laudem adstantes invitat:

The minister invites those present to the praise of God:

Benedicamus Domino.

Let us bless the Lord.

Omnes respondent:

All respond:

Deo gratias.

Thanks be to God.

Alia acclamatio proferri potest.

Other acclamations may be given.

Until the 1940s or so, husbands typically did not wear wedding rings; it was solely a wifely custom. The ceremonial in the Traditional Rite

The mutual consent to the marriage understood, the priest joins their right hands together, and says:

I join you in marriage. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, ✠ and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Or other words may be used, according to the received rite of each place.

Mutuo autem contrahentium consensu intellecto, Sacerdos jubeat eos invicem jungere dexteras, et dicat:

Ego conjungo vos in matrimonium. In nomine Patris, et Filii, ✠ et Spiritus Sancti. Amen. Vel aliis utatur verbis juxta receptum uniuscujusque loci ritum.

Afterwards he sprinkles them with blessed water.

Postea eos aspergat aqua benedicta.

assumes this to be the case. However, one can easily bless two rings, and duplicate the ceremony as needed.

BENEDICTIO ET TRADITIO ANULORUM

THE BLESSING AND GIVING OF THE RINGS

Then he blesses the ring, saying:

Mox benedicat annulum, dicens:

V . Our help is in the Name of the Lord.

V . *Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini.*

R . Who made heaven and earth.

R . *Qui fecit caelum et terram.*

V . O Lord, hear my prayer.

V . *Domine, exaudi orationem meam.*

R . And let my cry come unto Thee.

R . *Et clamor meus ad te veniat.*

Ÿ. The Lord be with you.
℞. And with thy spirit.
 Let us pray.

Ÿ. Dominus vobiscum.
℞. Et cum spiritu tuo.
 Oremus.

Minister dicit:

The minister says:

Benedicat ☩ *Dominus hos anulos, quos alter alteri tradituri estis in signum amoris et fidelitatis.*

May the Lord bless ☩ these rings, which you are about to give to one another, as a sign of love and fidelity.

℞. Amen.

Aliæ formulæ benedictionis anulorum, nn. 229–230.

Pro opportunitate, anulos aspergit et tradit sponsis.

℞. Amen.

Other formulas for the blessing of the rings, nn. 229–230.

At this point, he sprinkles the rings and gives them to the spouses.

Sponsus

anulum, sponsæ destinatum, digito anulari sponsæ inserit, pro opportunitate dicens:

N., accipe hunc anulum in signum amoris mei et fidelitatis meæ. In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti.

Item sponsa anulum, sponso destinatum, digito anulari sponsi inserit, pro opportunitate dicens:

N., accipe hunc anulum in signum amoris mei et fidelitatis meæ. In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti.

Tunc a tota communitate proferri potest hymnus vel canticum laudis.

The husband puts the ring meant for the wife on the wife's ring fingers, now saying:

N., receive this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Again the wife puts the ring meant for the husband on the husband's ring finger, now saying:

N., receive this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Then a hymn or canticle of praise may be offered by the whole community.

The Traditional Rite affirms the sealing of the relationship with the ring in the Names of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, which has been removed from the Novel Rite. Furthermore, the Traditional

PRAYER

Bless ☩, O Lord, this ring, which we bless in Thy Name, that, when she will wear it, having full faithfulness to her husband, she may remain in peace and in Thy Will, and live always in mutual love. Through Christ, Our Lord.

℞. Amen.

Then the priest sprinkles the ring with blessed water; and the groom, having received the ring from the hand of the priest, puts it on the ring finger of the left hand of the bride, saying:

With this ring I thee wed, and I plight unto thee my troth.

Then the priest says:

Rite follows this with a long set of verses from the psalms (more Scripture than the Novel Rite has excised!) and a beautiful prayer, which has been deleted.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, ☩ and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

ORATIO

Bene ☩ dic, Domine, anulum hunc, quem nos in tuo nomine bene ☩ dicimus, ut, quæcum gestaverit, fidelitatem integram suo sponso tenens, in pace, et voluntate tua permaneat atque in mutua caritate semper vivat. Per Christum, Dominum nostrum.

℞. Amen.

Deinde Sacerdos aspergat anulum aqua benedicta; et sponso acceptum anulum de manu Sacerdotis imponat in digito anulari sinistrae manus sponsæ, dicens:

With this ring I thee wed, and I plight unto thee my troth.

Tunc sacerdos dicit:

In nomine Patris, et Filii, ☩ et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

Then the priest continues:

℣. Confirm this, O God, which Thou has worked among us.

℞. From Thy holy temple, which is in Jerusalem.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Our Father *quietly up until*

℣. And lead us not into temptation.

℞. But deliver us from evil.

℣. Save Thy servants.

℞. My God, hoping in Thee.

℣. Send them, O Lord, help from the holy place.

℞. And from Zion defend them.

℣. Be to them, O Lord, a tower of strength.

℞. From the face of the enemy.

℣. O Lord, hear my prayer.

℞. And let my cry come unto Thee.

℣. The Lord be with you.

℞. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

PRAYER

Look down, we beseech Thee, O Lord, upon these Thy servants: and in these institutions, which Thou hast established for the propagation of the human race, kindly assist them; that those who have been joined together by Thine act may be saved by Thy help. Through Christ, Our Lord.

℞. Amen.

Mox Sacerdos subjungat:

℣. Confirma hoc, Deus, quod operatus es in nobis.

℞. A templo sancto tuo, quod est in Jerusalem.

Kyrie, eleison. Christe, eleison. Kyrie, eleison.

Pater noster secreto usque ad

℣. Et ne nos inducas in tentationem.

℞. sed libera nos a malo.

℣. Salvos fac servos tuos.

℞. Deus meus, sperantes in te.

℣. Mitte eis, Domine, auxilium de sancto.

℞. Et de Sion tuere eos.

℣. Esto eis, Domine, turris fortitudinis.

℞. A facie inimici.

℣. Domine, exaudi orationem meam.

℞. Et clamor meus ad te veniat.

℣. Dominus vobiscum

℞. Et cum spiritu tuo.

Oremus.

ORATIO

Respice, quæsumus, Domine, super hos famulos tuos: et institutis tuis, quibus propagationem humani generis ordinasti, benignus assiste; ut, qui te auctore junguntur, te auxiliante serventur. Per Christum, Dominum nostrum.

℞. Amen.

We have seen the problems with these so-called “Universal Prayer” segments, also called “bidding prayers” and “prayers of the faithful”. While the Novel Rite is determined to jam them into every sacramental liturgy, they seem uniquely misplaced here. The couple have just

conferred the sacrament on one another, and the Church is preparing to confer her nuptial blessing upon them. Why are we asking the faithful to make ad-hoc invocations at this time?

**ORATIO
UNIVERSALIS**

Tunc fit oratio universalis (cuius specimina proponuntur in nn. 251–252):

a) primo minister ad precandum invitat;

b) sequuntur invocationes orationis universalis cum responsione fidelium, ita tamen ut singulae invocationes congruant cum benedictione nuptiali, nec illam reduplicent;

c) si sacra Communio distribui non debet, sequitur Oratio dominica;

d) deinde, omissa oratione conclusiva, minister invocat Dei benedictionem super sponsam et sponsum, quo numquam omittitur.

As noted above, in the Traditional Rite the marriage occurs before Mass, and the bride and groom therefore hear their first Mass together immediately thereafter. In the Novel Rite, the marriage typically occurs during Mass.

The Traditional Rite imparts the nuptial blessing after the Pa-

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

Then the universal prayer is done (of which types are proposed in nn. 251–252):

a) at first the minister invites to prayer;

b) the invocations of the universal prayer follow, with the response of the faithful; thus, however, that each invocation be suitable for the nuptial blessing, and not duplicate it;

c) if Holy Communion is not to be distributed, the Sunday prayer follows;

d) then, the omitted prayer having been finished, the minister calls upon the blessing of God over the wife and husband, of which nothing is omitted.

**BENEDICTIO
NUPTIALIS**

Sponsi in loco suo permanent et genuflectunt.

Tunc minister prosequitur, manibus iunctis:

Nunc super hos sponso De benedictionem supplices invocemus, ut ipse suo foveat benignus auxilio quos ditavit conubii sacramento.

Aliæ formulæ, nn. 73, 241.

Et omnes per aliquod temporis spatium in silentio orant.

Deinde minister, stans ad sponso conversus et manibus extensis super eos, profert orationem sequentem.

In ultima paragrapho orationis, verba unci inclusa possunt, sicubi rerum

NUPTIAL BLESSING

The spouses remain in their place and genuflect.

Then the minister continues, hands joined:

Now let us, supplicants call upon the blessing of God over these spouses, that He may kindly favor them by His help, whom He had enriched by the sacrament of marriage.

Other formulas, nn. 73, 241.

And all, for some space of time, pray in silence.

Then the minister, standing facing the spouses and with his hands stretched out over them, offers the following prayer.

In the last paragraph of the prayer, the words included may be omitted, if it seems to be appropriate to those being joined, for example, if

NUPTIAL BLESSING

ter noster, right before the bride and groom receive Communion—a uniquely perfect place for it. To be blessed in their marriage and immediately thereafter to receive Our Lord! We move the Traditional Rite’s nuptial blessing here, though, for comparison with that of the Novel Rite.

Having said the Pater noster, the priest, before he says Libera nos, quæsumus, Domine, standing on the Epistle side facing the spouses kneeling before the altar, he says the following prayers over them:

**BENEDICTIO
NUPTIALIS**

Dicit Pater noster, sacerdos, antequam dicat Libera nos, quæsumus, DOMine, stans in latere Epistolæ versus sponso ante altare genuflexos, dicit super eos sequentes orationes:

adiuncta id suadere videantur, ex. gr. si sponi sint aetatis propectae. the spouses are of advanced age.

These are long prayers that warrant close comparison. For a beginning, though, note that the Traditional Rite prayer, after a blessing on the marriage as a whole, spends nearly its whole length talking about the bride. The bride is clearly the focus here, and countless blessings are called down upon her. Further note the deeply Scriptural blessings that are asked for her: that she be amiable like Rachel, wise like Rebecca, faithful like Sarah. The Novel Rite instead tries to give equal time to the bride and the groom; it seems odd, given the stereotypes involved, that the Traditional Rite would be, apparently, too propitious on the bride's behalf!

Note also the beautiful closing: may the couple see their children's children to the third and fourth generation, and come to a welcome old age. This has been truncated in the Novel Rite's nuptial blessing, and as a whole made optional anyway, whenever "it seems to be appropriate to those to be joined".

It is also worth noting that the Traditional Rite, though replete with blessings regarding the spouses being faithful to one another and comforts to one another, still lays emphasis on the primary end of their

union: the propagation of the human race. This remains unmentioned in the Novel Rite, which instead excised the entire opening prayer.

The Novel Rite has excised the reference to Eve having been made from Adam, which the Traditional Rite explicitly cited, noting that the female body had been made from the flesh of the male; instead, the Novel Rite changes this mention of creation to one of marriage, making the two into one flesh. Removing the reference to creation, and the indisputable fact that God made woman from the flesh of the man, seems indefensible.

Lastly, note that the Novel Rite's blessing implicitly contradicts Ephesians 5, where the husband is clearly named as the head of the wife. In the Novel Rite's blessing, the husband is told to acknowledge his wife as "an equal partner"; but St. Paul tells us, "Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord." No Catholic would deny that his wife has a soul as dignified and worthy as his own; but he would, and should, deny that she has an equal role in their marriage. There are ways to interpret this, of course, consistent with Ephesians; but the appearance here is one of contradiction.

Render favorable, O Lord, our prayers, and by Thine institutions, by which Thou hast ordained the propagation of the human race, kindly help us; that what is joined together by Thine authorship may be preserved with Thine help. Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son; Who livest and reignest with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit: God, forever and ever. Amen.

Let us pray.

O God, Who madest all things out of nothing by the power of Thy strength; Who, the beginnings of the universe being laid down, didst establish the inseparable help of the woman for the man, made in the image of God, as Thou gavest a beginning to the female body from the male flesh, teaching that what pleased Thee to be made from one, may never be unjoined: O God, Who with so surpassing a mystery hast consecrated the conjugal bond, that in the pact of marriage Thou might-

Propitiare, Domine, supplicationibus nostris, et institutis tuis, quibus propagationem humani generis ordinasti, benignus assiste: ut, quod te auctore iungitur, te auxiliante servetur. Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, Filium tuum; qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti, Deus: per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Oremus.

Deus, qui potestate virtutis tuae de nihilo cuncta fecisti: qui, dispositis universitatis exordiis, homini, ad imaginem Dei facto, ideo inseparabile mulieris adiutorium condidisti, ut femineo corpori de virili dares carne principium, docens, quod ex uno placuisset institui, numquam licere disiungi: Deus, qui tam excellenti mysterio conjugalem copulam consecrasti, ut Christi et Ecclesiae sacramentum praesignares in foedere nuptiarum: Deus, per quem mu-

Deus, qui potestate virtutis tuae de nihilo cuncta fecisti, qui dispositis universitatis exordiis et homine ad imaginem tuam facto, inseparabile viro mulieris adiutorium condidisti, ut iam non duo essent, sed una caro, docens quod unum placuisset institui numquam licere disiungi; Deus, qui tam excellenti mysterio coniugalem copulam consecrasti, ut Christi et Ecclesiae sacramentum praesignares in foedere nuptiarum; Deus, per quem mu-

O God, Thou Who madest all things out of nothing by the power of Thy strength, Who ordered all things in the beginning of the universe and made man in Thine image, Thou hast established an inseparable help for the man of the woman, that they might be no more two, but one flesh, teaching that what Thou hast pleased to make one may never be separated; O God, Who with so surpassing a mystery hast consecrated the conjugal bond, that in the pact of marriage Thou mightst prefigure

lier iungitur viro, et societas, principaliter ordinata, ea benedictione donatur, quæ sola nec per originalis peccati pœnam nec per diluuii est ablata sententiam. Respice propitius super hos famulos tuos, qui, maritali iuncti consortio, tua se expetunt benedictione muniri: emitte super eos Spiritus Sancti gratiam, ut, caritate tua in cordibus eorum diffusa, in coniugali fœdere fideles permaneant. Sit in famula tua N. gratia dilectionis et pacis, imitatrixque sanctarum remaneat feminarum, quarum in Scripturis laudes prædicantur. Confideat in ea cor viri sui, qui, parem sociam et gratiæ vitæ coheredem agnoscens, eam honore debito prosequatur eoque diligat semper amore, quo Christus suam dilexit Ecclesiam. Et nunc te, Domine, deprecamur, ut hi famuli tui nexi fidei mandatisque permaneant, et, uni thoro iuncti, morum sint integritate conspicui; Evangelii robore communiti, bonum Christi testimonium omnibus manifestent; (in sobole sint fecundi, sint parentes virtutibus comprobati; videant ambo filios filiorum suorum) et, optatam demum senectutem adepti, ad beatorum vitam et ad cœlestia regna perveniant. Per Christum Dominum nostrum.

℞. Amen.

Aliæ formulæ benedictionis nuptialis, nn. 242, 244.

the sacrament of Christ and the Church; O God, through Whom the woman is joined to the man, and a society principally ordered by this blessing is given, which alone has not been wiped out, neither through the penalty of original sin nor through the sentence of the Flood. Look down with favor upon these, Thy servants, who, coming together in the marital bond, beg to be strengthened by Thy blessing; send forth the grace of the Holy Spirit upon them, that, covered by Thy love in their hearts, they may remain faithful in the conjugal pact. May the grace of love and peace be on Thy handmaid, N., and may she remain an imitator of holy women, the praises of whom are preached in the Scriptures. May the heart of her husband confide in her, who, acknowledging her as an equal and coheir in the life of grace, may follow her in deserved honor and love her always with the love by which Christ loved His Church. And now, O Lord, we beseech Thee, that these, Thy servants, may remain tied by faith and commandment, and, joined in one bed, they may be conspicuous in integrity of morals; fortified by the help of the Gospel, may they show forth good testimony of Christ in all things; (may they be fertile in offspring, and prove to be parents in virtue; may they both see their children's children), and, arriving at last in old age, may they come to the life of the blessed and to the heavenly kingdom. Through Christ Our Lord.

℞. Amen.

Other formulas of the nuptial blessing, nn. 242, 244.

est prefigure the sacrament of Christ and the Church; O God, through Whom the woman is joined to the man, and a society principally ordered by this blessing is giving, which alone has not been wiped out, neither through the penalty of original sin nor through the sentence of the Flood; look down favorably upon this, Thy handmaid, who, by joining the marital partnership, begs that she be fortified by Thy protection; may this be a yoke of love and peace; may she be married faithful and chaste in Christ, and remain an imitator of holy women: may she be amiable to her husband, like Rachel; wise, like Rebecca; long-lived and faithful, like Sarah; may the author of transgression seize upon nothing in her from his own acts: may she remain bound to faith and the commandments: joined in one bed, may she flee unlawful contacts: may she fortify her weakness with the help of discipline: may she be serious in modesty, venerable in decency, learned in heavenly doctrines; may she be fertile in offspring, may she be innocent and esteemed; and may she come through to the rest of the blessed and the heavenly kingdom: and may they both see their children's children even to the third and fourth generation, and come to a welcome old age. Through the same Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.

quem mulier iungitur viro, et societas principaliter ordinata ea benedictione donatur, quæ sola nec per originalis peccati pœnam nec per diluuii est ablata sententiam: respice propitius super hanc famulam tuam, quæ, maritali iungenda consortio, tua se expetit protectione muniri: sit in ea iugum dilectionis et pacis: fidelis et casta nubat in Christo, imitatrixque sanctarum permaneat feminarum: sit amabilis viro suo, ut Rachel: sapiens, ut Rebecca: longæva et fidelis, ut Sara: nihil in ea ex actibus suis ille auctor prævaricationis usurpet: nexa fidei mandatisque permaneat: uni thoro iuncta, contactus illicitos fugiat: munit infirmitatem suam robore disciplina: sit verecundia gravis, pudore venerabilis, doctrinis cœlestibus erudita: sit fecunda in sobole, sit probata et innocens: et ad beatorum requiem atque ad cœlestia regna perveniat: et videant ambo filios filiorum suorum usque in tertiam et quartam generationem, et ad optatam perveniant senectutem. Per eundem Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, Filium tuum: qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti, Deus: per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Deinde, si sacra Communio distribui non debet, statim minister benedicit populum, dicens:

Et vos omnes, qui hic simul adestis, benedicat omnipotens Deus, Pater, et Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus.

R. Amen.

Celebratio laudabiliter cantu apto perficitur.

Then, if Holy Communion is not to be distributed, the minister immediately blesses the people, saying:

And may the Almighty God bless all of you who are here, Father, Son, † and Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

It is praiseworthy to finish the celebration with a suitable song.

In the Traditional Rite, just prior to the general blessing, the couple gets an additional blessing. The priest is also to deliver a “grave word”

regarding their duties to one another, then gives them an additional sprinkling with holy water. The Novel Rite has totally excised this.

May the God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob be with you: and may He fill you with His blessing, that you may see your children’s children even unto the third and fourth generation, and afterwards have eternal life without end, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth, God, forever and ever. *R. Amen.*

Deus Abraham, Deus Isaac, et Deus Jacob sit vobiscum: et ipse adimpleat benedictionem suam i vobis: ut videatis filios filiorum vestrorum usque ad tertiam et quartam generationem, et postea vitam aeternam habeatis sine fine: adjuvante Domino nostro Jesu Christo, qui cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivit et regnat Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

The priest warns them with a grave word that, remaining in the fear of God and loving one another, they keep conjugal chastity and mutual faith, and carefully raise their children in the Catholic religion. Afterwards, he sprinkles them with holy water, and having said the *Placeat tibi, sancta Trinitas*, gives the blessing; and reads, as is the custom, the beginning of the Gospel according to John.

Monent eos sacerdos gravi sermone, ut, in Dei timore manentes et alterutrum diligentes, mutuam fidem et conjugalem castitatem servant, atque prolem in catholica religione sedulo instituant. Postea eos aspergat aqua benedicta, et, dicto Placeat tibi, sancta Trinitas, det benedictionem; et legat, ut solitum est, initium Evangelii secundum Joannem.

There is not much more to say here that has not already been said. Throughout, the Novel Rite’s liturgy for matrimony makes changes that deemphasize the primary end of matrimony, emphasize its secondary end, neglect Scriptural references, and implicitly overturn the God-ordained order of the spouses in their marriages as explicitly noted in

the Scriptures. Here, as in the other sacramental liturgies, we must ask: is it any wonder that Catholics worldwide have an increasingly weak, or even heretical, understanding of the sacraments that they are receiving in this rite?