

Composing Intercessions for Your Wedding

In some places, engaged couples are invited to compose the intercessions or intentions for their wedding ceremony. Our liturgical norms tell us that these “should be sober, be composed with a wise liberty and in few words, and they should be expressive of the prayer of the entire community” (*General Instruction of The Roman Missal*, #71). In other words the intercessions should sound noble, fitting the liturgical celebration in which they will be announced, and should not be overly focused on you.

Each intercession should follow a simple three-part pattern that begins with an announcement of the persons, institutions, or need for which the assembly is invited to pray. A second statement identifies the specific request the community places before God. Last is the invitation to prayer. Take this prayer of the faithful example:

- 1) “For peace in our world.
- 2) May all lands that suffer violence and injustice find peace and reconciliation.
- 3) We pray to the Lord.”

The assembly then responds with a simple petition such as, “Lord, hear our prayer.”

Keep in mind that rhythm in liturgical celebration is essential. The more closely the intercessions resemble one another in length and wording, the more likely it is that they will evoke profound reverence and heartfelt prayer. For example, each of the three parts might begin in the same way for each intercession:

For. . . .

May. . . .

We pray. . . .

You will want to prepare between five and eight intercessions. The usual series is:

- a) for the needs of the Church;
- b) for public authorities and the salvation of the whole world;
- c) for those burdened by any kind of difficulty;
- d) for the local community.

For your wedding, it is appropriate to expand d) and include specific intercessions for yourselves as you begin your marriage, for other married persons, and for any loved ones who have died or are in serious need.

Be sure to forward the intercessions to your presider prior to the wedding so that you can discuss any concerns he might have.

The intercessions can be led by a reader or by your presider. If led by a reader, be sure to provide the person a copy of the intercessions well ahead of time so that he or she can practice. If at all possible this reader should be present at your wedding rehearsal and practice on the microphone that will be in use during your wedding.