

# Order of Celebrating Matrimony, Second Edition, What's New?

by Fr. Dan Merz

On November 12, 2013, the U.S. Bishops approved two documents with far reaching effects for the Sacrament of Marriage:

- the English translation of the Order of Celebrating Matrimony, Second Typical Edition;
- particular adaptations to the Order of Celebrating Matrimony for the United States.

Following the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), the Church published a revised Order of Celebrating Matrimony (in Latin) in 1969 and the official English translation was published in 1970. In 1991, a revised version of this Order of Matrimony was published (in Latin), but the English translation was delayed for various reasons until now. In summer 2015, Rome gave its required approval to the work voted on by the U.S. Bishops. Available for purchase on August 25, 2016, the new Order can be used as of September 8, 2016 and must be used as of December 30, 2016 and after.

## *What's New in the Second Edition?*

Several things:

- With the publication of the revised rite, its name will be changed from the present *Rite of Marriage* to *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*;
- the *Praenotanda* or Introduction is greatly expanded, giving a deeper exposition of the Church's theology of Marriage (44 paragraphs now as opposed to only 18 before);
- the Entrance Rites are expanded and elaborated, with two sample introductory addresses provided for the priest or deacon;
- it is now clarified that the Penitential Act is omitted (something which is usually done whenever there is a solemn procession at the beginning of Mass), and that the *Gloria* is always included when marriage is celebrated in the context of Mass;
- within the Order of Celebrating Matrimony itself, there is an alternate form provided for the "Reception of Consent" that invokes Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and even Adam and Eve;
- following the consent, the whole assembly is invited to respond:
  - Celebrant: Let us bless the Lord
  - Assembly: Thanks be to God
- An optional hymn or canticle of praise may be sung by the assembly following the blessing and giving of rings [or following the blessing and giving of the *Arras*]
- whereas a prayer for the couple could already be inserted into Eucharistic Prayer I, similar prayers are now provided for Eucharistic Prayers II and III;
- two sample Prayers of the Faithful are provided;
- the four Nuptial Blessings now include an explicit epiclesis or invocation calling forth the blessing of the Holy Spirit:
  - "Send down on them the grace of the Holy Spirit and pour your love into their hearts, that they may remain faithful in the Marriage covenant."

Finally, there are two new rituals provided in the appendices:

- An Order of Blessing an Engaged Couple;
- and an Order of Blessing a Married Couple within Mass on the Anniversary of Marriage (this includes sample formulas for a renewal of commitment and a blessing of rings, both for the original rings or for new ones).

### ***What are new U.S. adaptations?***

The Holy See approved certain adaptations to the Order of Celebrating Marriage for use in the United States. One of them is already in the current Rite:

- an alternate, optional, form of the exchange of consent, except the text will be slightly expanded in the new translation.

Two other adaptations are new:

- the optional blessing and giving of the *arras* (coins)
- and the optional blessing and placing of the *lazo* or veil.

### ***Blessing and Giving of the Arras (Coins)***

These adaptations—important for Hispanic and Filipino cultures—have already been approved for use in the United States in Spanish since 2010. Making them available in English translation is intended for occasions when one of the spouses has this cultural background but the other does not speak Spanish, or where both couples have this cultural background, but have become more accustomed to English than Spanish.

The word *arras* literally means “pledge.” Usually, the *arras* consists of a small cask containing thirteen gilded or plated coins symbolizing prosperity. The formula which both bride and groom say to each other during the exchange of the *arras* highlights their commitment to share together all the goods which they will receive during their married life.

### ***Blessing and Placing of the Lazo or Veil***

The *lazo* is a type of lasso or yoke to symbolize the marriage union. Its most usual form is a double-looped rosary; one loop goes over the groom’s shoulders and the other over the bride’s with the cross hanging between them. The two are now tied together for life, so to speak. To use the biblical expression, they become “one flesh.”

The veil seems to have had its origins as a symbol of both a dying to one’s past self (like a funeral pall) and as a protection from danger (like a cloak or protective covering). While the woman wears the veil, it is placed over the shoulder of the man and oftentimes the *lazo* helps to hold it in place. It is usually placed just before the Nuptial Blessing, since the Nuptial Blessing, symbolized by the veil, is the “protection” which the Church offers the newly married couple.

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