

Dear Couple,

Here is material to assist you in the preparation for your wedding. You will find samples of readings and vows, a typical schedule of the ceremony, and a registry form. Read this material and if you should have any questions, please contact me either through email (frgreg1936@yahoo.com) or phone 630-515-9119.

Thank you.
Fr. Greg

Marriage Preparation Material

Frequently Asked Questions.

- **Are you really a Roman Catholic priest?** Yes. Canon 290 in Church law states “After it has been validly received, sacred ordination never becomes invalid”.
- **Are the sacraments you perform/officiate valid?** If by valid we mean **legally** valid, yes, they are valid. However, they are not recognized by the Catholic Church since I do not have permission or license from the bishop. This means I cannot register your marriage/baptism with the local parish. Rather, these are registered with CITI Ministries, Inc.
- **What is the fee/cost of your services for weddings?** Since I look on this service as ministry, I have no direct fee/cost, which for marriage is usually \$250-\$300. I do not know your financial situation. Whatever donation you make will help defer the cost of preparation, travel, etc. and also promote this ministry. The **principal focal point** is the sacrament itself which should not be compromised.
- **What instructions do we have to attend?** I do not require any set program of instructions. You are adults and can read the literature. For marriage, I encourage the couple to meet with me several times to review the key issues in a marriage journey. I am available any time during the weekday from 9 am-9pm, and on Saturday mornings. These sessions are 1- 1.5 hr. at my residence (107 W. 55th ST., Downers Grove, IL, 60515).
- **Can we design our own ceremony, vows, readings, etc.?** Yes, to a certain extent. I have material below with suggestions and samples of such. I encourage the couple to concentrate on a sacred presentation and ceremony, using their own or traditional vows and incorporating any customs, options (unity candle, sand ceremony, butterfly release, etc.). If there is a blended family situation, I encourage that the children be incorporated into the ceremony, depending on their age.
- **Can we meet with you prior to making a commitment?** By all means, and bring those of your family who may have questions regarding priesthood, sacrament, marriage, etc. No question is too insignificant. Just call or email for an appointment.
- **Do you issue any certificate/document for marriage?** Yes, besides authorizing and signing the marriage license, I issue a certificate that states your marriage by a Roman Catholic priest

Samples of Readings for Weddings

Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (1Cor.13)

“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I gain nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.”

Other suggestions from the Bible

Genesis: Chapter 1, verses 26-28 – Created in God's image.

Song of Solomon: Chapter 2, verses 10-13 – My beloved speaks to me

Ruth: Chapter 1, verses 16-17 – Where you go, I will go

Ecclesiastes: Chapter 4, verses 9-12 – Two are better than one

John: Chapter 2, verses 1 -Marriage feast of Cana

Secular/Romantic readings

R 1. Love is... by Susan Schutz

“Love is being happy for the other person when they are happy. Being sad for the other person when they are sad. Being together in good times, and being together in bad times. Love is the source of **strength**. Love is being honest with yourself at all times. Being honest with the other person at all times. Telling, listening, respecting the truth and never pretending. Love is the source of **reality**. Love is an understanding that is so complete that you feel as if you are a part of the other person. Accepting the other person just the way they are and not trying to change them to be something else. Love is the source of **unity**. Love is the freedom to pursue your own desires while sharing your experiences with the other person. The growth of one individual alongside of and together with the growth of another individual. Love is the source of **success**. Love is the excitement of planning things together, the excitement of doing things together. Love is the source of the **future**. Love is the fury of the storm, the calm of the rainbow. Love is the source of **passion**. Love is giving and taking in a daily situation; being patient with each other's needs and desires. Love is the source of **sharing**. Love is knowing that the other person will always be with you regardless of what happens. Missing the other person when they are away but remaining near in heart at all times. Love is the source of **security**. **Love is the source of life.**”

R 2. Marriage Joins Two People in the Circle of Love by Edmund O'Neill

“Marriage is a commitment to life, to the best that two people can find and bring out in each other. It offers opportunities for sharing and growth that no other human relationship can equal; a joining that is promised for a lifetime. Within the circle of its

love, marriage encompasses all of life's most important relationships. A wife and a husband are each other's best friend, confidant, lover, teacher, listener, and critic. There may come times when one partner is heartbroken or ailing, and the love of the other may resemble the tender caring of a parent for a child. Marriage deepens and enriches every facet of life. Happiness is fuller; memories are fresher; commitment is stronger; even anger is felt more strongly, and passes away more quickly. Marriage understands and forgives the mistakes life is unable to avoid. It encourages and nurtures new life, new experiences, and new ways of expressing love through the seasons of life. When two people pledge to love and care for each other in marriage, they create a spirit unique to themselves, which binds them closer than any spoken or written words. ***Marriage is a promise, a potential, made in the hearts of two people who love, which takes a lifetime to fulfill.***

R 3. From “*The Irrational Season*” by Madeleine L'Engle

“Ultimately there comes a time when a decision must be made. Ultimately two people who love each other must ask themselves how much they hope for as their love grows and deepens, and how much risk they are willing to take. It is indeed a fearful gamble. Because it is the nature of love to create, a marriage itself is something which has to be created. To marry is the biggest risk in human relations that a person can take. If we commit ourselves to one person for life this is not, as many people think, a rejection of freedom; rather it demands the courage to move into all risks of freedom, and the risk of love which is permanent; into that love which is not possession, but participation. It takes a lifetime to learn another person. When love is not possession, but participation, then it is part of that co-creation which is our human calling.”

R 4. Love is Friendship Caught Fire by Laura Hendricks

“Love is friendship caught fire; it is quiet, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving. It is loyalty through good and bad times. It settles for less than perfection, and makes allowances for human weaknesses. Love is content with the present, hopes for the future, and does not brood over the past. It is the day-in and day-out chronicles of irritations, problems, compromises, small disappointments, big victories, and working toward common goals. If you have love in your life, it can make up for a great many things you lack. If you do not have it, no matter what else there is, it is not enough.”

R 5. “Sooner or Later”

“Sooner or later we begin to understand that love is more than verses on valentines, and romance in the movies. We begin to know that love is here and now, real and true, the most important thing in our lives. For love is the creator of our favorite memories, and the foundation of our fondest dreams. Love is a promise that is always kept, a fortune that can never be spent, a seed that can flourish in even the most unlikely of places. And this radiance that never fades, this mysterious and magical joy, is the greatest treasure of all-- one known only by those who love.”

R 6. Excerpt from *The Bridge Across Forever* by Richard Bach

“A soulmate is someone who has locks that fit our keys, and keys to fit our locks. When we feel safe enough to open the locks, our truest selves step out and we can be

completely and honestly who we are; we can be loved for who we are and not for who we are pretending to be. Each unveils the best part of the other. No matter what else goes wrong around us, with that one person we are safe in our own paradise. Our soulmate is someone who shares our deepest longings, our sense of direction. When we are in two balloons, and together our direction is up, chances are we have found the right person. Our soulmate is the one who makes life come to life.”

R 7. The Art of a Good Marriage by Wilfred Arlan Peterson

“Happiness in marriage is not something that just happens. A good marriage must be created. In a marriage the little things are the big things. You are never too old to hold hands. Remember to say “I love you” at least once a day. Never go to sleep angry. At no time take the other for granted. The courtship should not end with the honeymoon, it should continue through the years. You need to have a mutual sense of values and common objectives and stand together facing the world. Form a circle of love that gathers the whole family. Do things for each other, not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice, but in the spirit of joy. Speak words of appreciation and demonstrate gratitude in thoughtful ways. Do not look for perfection in each other. Cultivate flexibility, patience, understanding and a sense of humor. Have the capacity to forgive and forget. Give each other an atmosphere in which each can grow. Always search for the good and the beautiful. Establish a relationship in which the independence is equal, dependence is mutual, and the obligation is reciprocal. ***Remember, it is not only about marrying the right partner, it is being the right partner.***”

R 8. Blessing of the Hands

(Please join hands) “ These are the hands of your best friend, young and strong and full of love for you, that are holding yours on your wedding day, as you promise to love each other today, tomorrow, and forever. These are the hands that will work alongside yours, as together you build your future. These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, and with the slightest touch, will comfort you like no other. These are the hands that will hold you when fear or grief fills your mind. These are the hands that will countless times wipe the tears from your eyes; tears of sorrow, and tears of joy. These are the hands that will tenderly hold your children. They are the hands that will help you hold your family as one. These are the hands that will give you strength when you need it. And lastly, these are the hands that even when wrinkled and aged, will still be reaching for yours, still giving you the same unspoken tenderness with just a touch.”

Samples of Marriage Vows.

V 1. Traditional.

“I,____, take you,____, to be my wife/husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.”

V 2. “(Name), I take you to be my wife/husband. I promise you my deepest friendship, respect and love without any limits. I promise to be near you , whenever you need my presence. I promise to trust in your love for me, and to watch our love grow through the years. I promise to plan with you, dream with you, and to do my best to show you how much I love you. I promise to honor and cherish you, and to work with you to achieve the goals and dreams of our lives. I promise to provide for you to the best of my ability, and to make our home a haven where trust, love , patience, and laughter are abundant. I make these promises to you, (name), lovingly and freely, and vow to honor them all the days of my life.

V 3. (Name), I promise to always encourage your individuality and strength, because that is what makes you unique and wonderful. I promise to value your friendship, for it is a precious gift. I promise to help shoulder our challenges, because through them we will emerge stronger. I promise to love you above all others, for there is no one in the world more confident, honest, and forgiving. This is my solemn vow to you (name) today and all the days of my life.

V 4. In the name of God, I____take you____,as my wife/husband, companion, and friend; to love you, to honor you, to cherish you. I will never abandon or forsake you. Wherever you go, I will go. Wherever you lodge, I will lodge. Your struggles will be my struggles and your strength will be my strength. May the Lord unite us so that nothing until death will ever separate me from you. (Name) this is my solemn vow.

V 5. (Name), I give you my love, I give you my heart, I give you my hope, I give you my joy, from the treasury of my precious time, the rest of the days of my life. To delight in your body, to nourish your mind, to be at home with your spirit, the way a star is at home in the sky. To celebrate you with joy, the way the sun emblazons the sea with its light. To console you in sorrow, to wrap my heart around yours like a blanket, until we both grow old, and the sight fall from our eyes, and our being fall from life to light. I choose to go with you, (name), always from this day until the end of our days as your faithful husband/wife.

V 6. I love you (name). And because I do, I ask you to join me, to share my joys and my sorrows, to be by my side as I succeed, to comfort me and understand when I fail, to grow old with me, to stay young with me, to live and love and laugh with me, and to hold my hand and be in my heart, for the rest of our lives.

V 7. From this day on I choose you, ____, to be my wife/husband. I promise to live with you and to be always at your side; to laugh with you and to wipe you tears with my hands; to be joy to your heart and light to your soul; to see the best in you always. And for us, to strive to be the most that I can. I promise to celebrate with you in good times; I promise to comfort you when you are downhearted; to hold you in my arms, to share you with my soul, in the only way I know how, completely and forever.

Samples of the exchange of rings.

N 1. Traditional – (Name), take this ring as a sign of the love and fidelity. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

N 2. This ring is a token of my endless and abiding love, because it is you (name), whom I love, and it is you whom I am choosing always to encircle with my love. God bless us in our marriage.

N 3. This ring is a symbol to you, (name), and to all people of my endless love and ever present fidelity. Today, I take you as my wife/husband, as I give you my heart, my spirit, and my soul.

N 4. (Name), I give you this ring as a symbol of my unending love and commitment to you. I ask you to accept it as a sign of my faithful commitment to be your husband/wife.

N 5. (Name), with this ring, I give you my heart, my life, and my love.

Wedding schedule for the ceremony.

- ***Welcome.*** In the name of the couple, Fr. Greg welcomes all the guest to the wedding ceremony.
- ***Declaration of intent.*** The couple declares their intention before those present for the ceremony.
- ***Opening prayer.*** Fr. Greg invokes God's blessing on the couple.
- ***Reading(s).*** The person(s) that the couple chooses to read the selection(s) are invited to do so.
- ***Gospel/homily.*** Fr. Greg reads a short segment of the Gospel and proceeds with a brief homily.
- ***Pronouncement of vows/blessing of rings.*** The couple exchange wedding vows and rings.
- ***Options.*** Unity candle, roses for mothers, sand ceremony, customs, etc.
- ***Invocations.*** Fr. Greg says several short prayers for the couple.
- ***Recitation of the Lord's Prayer.***
- ***Final Wedding blessing.***
- ***Presentation of the couple to the guests.***

Please complete the following registry form and return to Fr. Greg

Sacramental Marriage Registry Form

Today's Date

Bride:

Groom:

Address:

Address:

City/State/Zip Code

Date of Baptism:

Date of Baptism:

Place of Baptism:

Place of Baptism:

Diocese:

Diocese:

Parents: Father

Father

Mother

Mother

Date of Marriage:

Diocese:

County

State

Witnesses: 1.

2.

Address:

City/State/Zip:

Phone:

**Officiant: Rev. Gregory Zimmerman, Roman Catholic Priesthood
107 W. 55th St.
Downers Grove, IL, 60515**

Fee for assisting you with the planning and preparation of your wedding ceremony along with travel to the wedding site--\$350.

This is acceptable_____

We could afford_____