



Wedding Liturgy Preparation



at St. Thomas Aquinas and
St. John Church & Student Center

*“The love of a man and a woman is made holy in the sacrament of marriage
and becomes the mirror of God’s everlasting love.”*

-Rite of Marriage

Congratulations on your engagement! May this be a season of grace and heavenly blessing.

You are coming to the Catholic Church to be married. A Catholic wedding is so much more than a social event. It is a sacrament in which a man and woman become husband and wife in the presence of God, the wedding Priest or deacon, and your family and friends.

This document will help you plan your wedding liturgy at St. Thomas Aquinas, St. John Church & Student Center or the MSU Alumni Chapel. Be sure to also consult with the Chapel Coordinator at Michigan State University when using that facility. <http://www.union.msu.edu/weddings/alumnichapel>
Don’t delay making plans. While it seems as though your wedding day is a long way off, this time will pass way too quickly. Please call upon us with specific questions not covered herein.

St. Thomas Aquinas Parish
955 Alton Rd.
East Lansing, MI 48823
517-351-7215

St. John Church & Student Center
327 MAC Ave.
East Lansing, MI 48823
517-337-9778

www.elcatholics.org/marriage

Wedding Coordinator: Denise Zakerski
517-337-9778 or weddings@elcatholics.org

Director of Music Ministry: Ali Darley
517-351-5460, ext. 318 or adarley@elcatholics.org

Please Note:

To be married at St. Thomas Aquinas or St. John Church & Student Center, one or both persons of the engaged couple must be a practicing Catholic, and be either:

*Registered permanent community member

*From a family registered at this parish

*A current MSU student, faculty or staff member

*A recent graduate of MSU.

Both parties must be free to marry in the Catholic Church.

Scheduling a Wedding

Decision guidelines require preparation for marriage to begin 9 months prior to the wedding date. To inquire about scheduling a wedding at either of our churches, one person of the engaged couple can contact the wedding coordinator at 517-337-9778. Please note: that the wedding coordinator must speak with the couple directly. Weddings cannot be scheduled with families of the couple, or with a wedding consultant.

Wedding Times

Wedding celebrations are scheduled as follows:

- ◆ 4:00 PM-6:00 PM Friday at either site
- ◆ 11:00AM Saturday at St. Thomas Aquinas
- ◆ 11:30 AM Saturday at St. John
- ◆ 1:30 PM Saturday at St. Thomas Aquinas
- ◆ 2:00 PM Saturday at St. John

Required Documents

Both parties (if baptized) are to obtain a copy of their baptismal certificate from their church of baptism and have it mailed to the wedding coordinator as soon as possible. (*St. John Church & Student Center; Attn. Denise; 327 M.A.C. Ave; East Lansing MI 48823*) **For Catholics, this must be a recent* copy**, obtained by calling the church of baptism and requesting the certificate be mailed directly to St. John. **It cannot be requested more than 6 months before the wedding date.* For other denominations, a photocopy of the original or a letter from the church of baptism is acceptable.

Civil Marriage License

A Michigan civil marriage license must be delivered to the facility coordinator/presider before the wedding **at the rehearsal**. In Michigan, it takes three days to process the civil wedding license application. A marriage license is obtained from the County Clerk where you reside (if in Michigan) or where the wedding takes place. For Ingham County the County Clerk is located in Mason, MI. Licenses can be obtained one month prior to the wedding date.

Marriage Preparation:

All couples seeking to receive the sacrament of Marriage should prepare themselves for this lifelong commitment by taking part in a wedding preparation program offered by a parish and overseen by a priest or deacon. **Special Cases:** Couples, who are marrying at the MSU Alumni Chapel, St. Thomas Aquinas, or St. John and live outside the area, can complete their marriage preparation at their own parish. Couples who reside here but are being married elsewhere may also complete their marriage preparation here.

For St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John engaged couples, the marriage preparation is as follows:

1. **Wedding Workshop:** REQUIRED

You will meet with a priest to fill out the paperwork that is required for a marriage. Couples will also take a pre-marriage communication inventory called, "FOCCUS." (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study) There is a \$15 fee for the FOCCUS inventory. Please plan to bring cash or a check to the workshop if you have not already paid online.

2. **Individual Couple Preparation: REQUIRED**

Couples **MUST** meet at least two (or more) times with a Mentor Couple to discuss the results of the FOCCUS inventory. The mentor couple is not judging whether you are ready to marry. The goal of FOCCUS is to identify areas which you and your fiancé need to discuss. The mentor couple facilitates. **This is done in the East Lansing area.**

3. **Engaged Seminar: REQUIRED**

This daylong seminar is the highlight of preparation for many couples. The cost of this program is \$50, more information about the engaged seminar can be found on the parish website or in your pre-marriage packet. Couples may sign up for the engaged seminar at any time; they do not have to wait until they have attended the wedding workshop.

4. **Natural Family Planning (NFP) Classes: Optional**

Couples marrying at the St. Thomas Aquinas or St. John are strongly encouraged to take Natural Family Planning Classes (NFP). Couples may sign up for these classes at any time. Introduction material is included in the engaged seminar.

5. **We C.A.R.E.:** Optional

We C.A.R.E. is a Communication and Relationship Enhancement Program. Information about this program can be found in your pre-marriage packet. This is an optional program offered by the diocese.

Facility Coordinator & Presider

Since our parish hosts more than 70 weddings each year, you will be assigned a Facility Coordinator. Your coordinator will conduct your wedding rehearsal and make sure things run smoothly on the day of your wedding. If you have a wedding Mass, he/she will act as your sacristan.

COUPLES ARE RESPONSIBLE for scheduling a meeting with your priest/deacon a month or less before your wedding for sacramental and spiritual guidance as well as to review your wedding liturgy plan.

Fees

There is a \$75 fee for the Facility Coordinator. This person will make sure the building and rooms are open, run the rehearsal, and be at the wedding to assist. You will pay the coordinator at the rehearsal for the wedding.

An offering for the presiding priest or deacon (\$100-150) is appropriate. If any of these fees are problematic, please discuss this with the priest or deacon. This is given to the Facility Coordinator at the rehearsal for the wedding.

The music fees can be given to the coordinator at the rehearsal as well. For the fee schedule, please see page 5.

Wedding Mass or Wedding Ceremony?

When two practicing Catholics marry, they typically celebrate the Rite of Marriage with Mass. When a Catholic and a person of another Denomination or Faith marry, they should celebrate the Rite of Marriage without Mass ensuring that their family and friends can comfortably participate. **Both types of ceremony are equally valid.**

Planning the Wedding Celebration:

A Wedding Celebration Planning Form is included with the materials received at the Wedding Workshop.

The readings and responsorial psalms for the wedding Mass and ceremony can be found on pages 13-21. The engaged couple is invited to contact Ali Darley (adarley@elcatholics.org), Director of Music, to schedule a consultation to review music selections, reading selections and to discuss the wedding ceremony (this includes weddings at the Alumni Chapel). It is most helpful if this meeting takes place **at least two months prior to the wedding or as soon as you can.**

Music and Musicians

- ◇ The parish music ministry program will provide a pianist or organist and a cantor for your wedding liturgy.
- ◇ If a couple would like a musical piece that is not on the list, they may discuss this with the Director of Music at the consultation.
- ◇ Please be advised that only sacred music is permitted before, during, and after the wedding celebration. Recorded music is not permitted in the Catholic liturgy.
- ◇ Requests for a specific cantor or organist may be made to the Director of Music at the consultation.
- ◇ Arrangements for additional musicians [violin, trumpet, brass ensemble, string quartet, etc.] may be made for additional fees.

Musician	Rate
Pianist/Organist	Wedding Ceremony- \$150 Wedding Mass- \$175
Cantor/Vocalist	Wedding Ceremony- \$125 Wedding Mass- \$150
Instrumentalists	\$150 or more—please ask about specific instruments

Note: Musicians are to be paid prior to the beginning of your wedding liturgy. Checks payable directly to each musician are to be brought to your rehearsal to be given to your coordinator.

If you wish to have a family member or good friend sing or play an instrument, **please make arrangements with the Director of Music** to ensure that these individuals have music and an understanding of their responsibilities during the wedding liturgy.

If you choose to use outside musicians to provide music for your wedding liturgy, a bench fee will be assessed according to the amount of time you wish someone to be present after initial set up of accompanying instruments and microphones. The music selected should still follow the guidelines for appropriate music as outlined in this document. Communication must occur at least two weeks prior to your wedding date: how many musicians there will be, what instrument they will use to accompany (piano or organ), and if additional microphones are needed in addition to the one cantor microphone. The bench fee structure is listed below, and should be paid directly to the Director of Music prior to your wedding date.

The fees currently in effect when using outside musicians are as follows:

Level 1 Bench Fee	\$100 for Instrument and microphone set up and take-down: Initial sound check
Level 2 Bench Fee	\$150 includes above as well as presence during prelude music and wedding liturgy to run sound board.

Rehearsals above and beyond the day of the wedding liturgy are billed at a rate of \$75 per musician per rehearsal. Typically, the musicians do not attend the wedding rehearsal.

Photographs and Videography

Photographers must be mindful that a wedding is a sacred and sacramental celebration and thus they are not to be a distraction to the ceremony. A professional photographer may take photos throughout the liturgy, as long as it is done in good taste and does not interfere with the liturgy. Photography in the sanctuary before and after the liturgy is limited to 30 minutes.

Videotaping is permitted. The video camera is to remain stationary and may not block the aisle.

Flowers and Decorations

Please schedule someone to receive delivery of your flowers. It is most efficient if the flowers are delivered to the northeast entry at St. Thomas Aquinas (near the Bride's Room) and to the Gathering Space at St. John. Once the flowers are distributed, either the florist or a designee from the wedding party must clear away the floral boxes, paper, and debris.

Floral arrangements may be placed in the sanctuary in front of or around the altar. It is not appropriate to place flowers on the altar table itself. The flowers may not be taller than the altar table. We welcome you to leave the altar flowers in the church as a donation for the weekend masses. If you want to leave them, please tell the Facility Coordinator.

If you will be using pew decorations, use pew clips or ribbon to attach them. No tape of any kind is permitted on the pews. The decorations must be removed immediately after the celebration.

An aisle runner is not permitted. If you have a flower girl, she may not drop the petals. The aisle must be kept clear.

No Bubbles, Rice, Birdseed, Confetti, etc.

The throwing of rice, birdseed, "environmentally friendly" confetti, bubbles, bird release, or any other after ceremony "extras" is not in keeping with the sacred liturgical activity, therefore, they are not allowed. A special concern for the Parish is to prevent a wedding guest from slipping and being injured.

Guest Book and Receiving Lines

Please plan on setting up your guest book and receiving line at your reception site not at the church.

Wedding Program

Wedding programs are allowed. Creating and producing wedding programs are the responsibility of the wedding couple. A designee of the wedding party is required to collect all of the programs from the pews following the wedding.

Wedding Consultants and Personal Attendants

If you are utilizing the services of a wedding consultant, please advise him or her that the wedding rehearsal and wedding ceremony are the responsibility of St Thomas Aquinas' and St John's staff. Our facility

coordinators will take care of everything. They are trained and experienced. They know what works in the sanctuary and the priest's preferences. It is not necessary for an outside consultant to attend the rehearsal. Please remember that personal attendants and wedding consultants (if attending) are expected to follow the directives of the parish staff.

Wedding Rehearsal

Rehearsals can be scheduled with Denise Zakerski, in the office at St. John. Typically, the rehearsal will be scheduled after 5:00pm on the day before your wedding.

Rehearsals last approximately 60 minutes and should start and end on time, so please plan accordingly. The Facility Coordinator will run the rehearsal.

You will need to bring your marriage license, musician fees, facility coordinator fee, and priest stipend to the rehearsal and give them to the facility coordinator. Your coordinator will take care of distributing them to the proper people. If the wedding programs are going to be used, it is required to bring them to the Rehearsal.

Bride's & Groom's Rooms

Dressing rooms for the wedding party are available at both St. John Student Center and St. Thomas Aquinas.

PLEASE REMEMBER: Smoking, food and alcohol consumption is prohibited
in all parts of our buildings at all times.

Best Man and Maid of Honor as Witnesses

Under Michigan law, the Best Man and Maid of Honor have to be at least 18 years of age, as they need to be able to understand what they are witnessing, and be able to sign their legal signature.

Ushers

It is helpful to have ushers in addition to groomsmen. Groomsmen are often busy with photographs as the guests are arriving and are therefore unable to seat them. Ushers are also able assist at the beginning and end of the ceremony.

Children in the Wedding Party – Ring Bearers and Flower Girls

The parish recommends that children in the wedding party be at least six years of age. Experience has shown that younger children find it difficult to walk down the aisle. Often their parents are in the wedding party and are not available to assist their children, or to calm them if they are nervous or frightened. If children are included in the wedding party, please be mindful of their unique needs and plan accordingly.

Please note that flower petals may not dropped in the aisle.

Choosing Readers

The wedding celebration can include up to three readers at the liturgy. The couple has the following options for readers:

- one person for the first reading, one for the second reading, and one for the Universal Prayers (petitions)
- one person reads the first and second readings and the Universal Prayers
- one person reads the first reading, one person reads the second reading, and the Presider reads the Universal Prayers.

If the couple is celebrating the Rite of Marriage with a Mass, the readers must be Catholic. If the couple is celebrating a Rite of Marriage without a Mass, the readers may be Catholic or another Christian faith.

When choosing readers, please choose people who have had experience with reading in their own parish or church who can confidently proclaim the Word of God. Readers should plan on attending the wedding rehearsal. Engaged couples are asked to provide readers with a copy of “their” reading. Copies can be made from the “Readings” portion of this booklet.

Presenting the Offertory Gifts and Eucharistic Ministers

If a couple is celebrating with Mass, the couple has several choices. A) The couple can bring up the gifts [bread and wine] at the Preparation of the Altar B) The couple can designate someone to bring up the gifts or B) the facility coordinator can have the bread and wine already present on the altar.

Seating Pattern Options

Generally, there are two options for seating. In both options, the immediate family of the bride sits on the left side facing the altar and the immediate family of the groom on the right side. In the first option, there is no distinction in seating for other guests. In the second option, those greeting at the doors will ask guests whether they wish to be seated on the “bride’s side” or the “groom’s side.”

CHURCH FACILITY RESTRICTIONS

Food and Drink: Food and anything other than water is prohibited in the church, bride’s room, and groom’s room. No alcoholic beverages are allowed on the premises.

No Cell Phones: Use of cellular telephones in the church is not appropriate.

Clean-up after the Wedding Ceremony

Please designate a friend or family member to ensure that the church facility is left in good order:

- Bride’s and Groom’s rooms cleaned and returned to their original condition
- Wedding programs collected
- Floral boxes, floral paper, and debris removed
- Decorations removed
- Floral arrangements removed (*If not being left for the weekend masses*)

Parking and Accessibility at St John

For weddings at St. John Church & Student Center, a map with parking instructions can be provided and may be included as part of your invitation. The backdoor provides the easiest access to the church and the elevator for accessibility’s sake. You can enter the back door via the alley or the Grove Street ramp. Please note that East Lansing’s parking meters and ramp fees are in effect on Saturdays.

If you have any special needs regarding building use or parking validation, please contact our Director of Operations, Keith Tharp, at 517-351-7215 or keith@elcatholics.org.

THE WEDDING LITURGY

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Processional

Following the pattern familiar in most recent weddings in the US, in the procession at your wedding the priest or deacon goes first, with the groom, then the bridesmaids and groomsmen, and finally the bride. The bride and/or the groom may be accompanied by either or both parents, if desired. You will need to choose instrumental music during the opening procession of your wedding liturgy. Some couples choose a single piece of music for this procession; others choose two pieces, with the second piece beginning as the bride enters.

Greeting and Introduction

LITURGY OF THE WORD

According to the new Rite of Marriage, at least one reading must pertain to marriage. These are marked by an asterisk. Options are given for Old Testament, New Testament, Psalm and Gospel readings. You must choose at least one reading with an asterisk.

Old Testament Reading

Suggested readings can be found on pages 11 & 12. The reading from the body of revelation can be used in the Easter season.

Responsorial Psalm

Responsorial psalm options can be found on page 13 & 14. The verses are sung by the cantor who leads the congregation in the response

New Testament Reading

Suggested readings can be found on pages 14-16.

Gospel Acclamation

The Celtic Alleluia (WC 356) is led by the cantor prior to the reading of the Gospel.

Gospel Reading (Read by Priest or deacon)

Gospel reading selections can be found on pages 17 & 18.

THE RITE OF MARRIAGE

Questions before the Consent (Vows)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1) N. and N., have you come here to enter into Marriage without coercion, freely and wholeheartedly? | 2) Are you prepared, as you follow the path of Marriage, to love and honor each other for as long as you both shall live? | 3) Are you prepared to accept children lovingly from God and to bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church? |
| Bride/Groom respond: "I Have" | "I will" | "I will" |

Consent (Vows) – You are encouraged to memorize these

The priest or deacon invites you to join hands and declare your consent to enter into marriage before God and the Church. Two options are given in the rite for which form the consent may take.

[Vows 1]

I, **N.**, take you, **N.**, to be my wife/husband.
I promise to be faithful 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.

[Vows 2]

I, **N.**, take you, **N.**, for my lawful wife/husband,
to have and to hold, from this day forward,
for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish,
until death do us part.

You may choose to memorize these vows or repeat them after the priest or deacon.

After you have declared your consent, the presider recognizes this. Two options are given

[Consent 1]

May the Lord in his kindness
strengthen the consent you have declared
before the Church, and graciously bring to
fulfillment his blessing within you.
What God joins together, let no one put
asunder.

[Consent 2]

May the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the
God of Jacob, the God who joined together our
first parents in paradise,
strengthen and bless in Christ the consent you
have declared before the Church, so that
what God joins together, no one may put asunder.

Blessing of Rings

The priest or deacon asks God to bless the wedding rings.

As you put the rings on each other's fingers, you repeat after the priest or deacon,

“**N.**, receive this ring as a sign of my love and my fidelity,
(in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.)”

Hymn or Canticle of Praise *Optional

This is sung by the entire congregation in joyful recognition of the two becoming one. Director of Music will have suggestions.

Unity Candle

In the new rite, it is no longer proper to include this. You can do this at the reception. The hymn or canticle of praise is the suggested way of allowing the entire congregation to recognize the two becoming one.

Universal Prayer

The marriage rite continues with the Universal Prayer or petitions. This is a set of prayers specifically directed to the larger needs of the world, the church, and our communities. You may use one of the sample forms given here. The congregation responds: “Lord Hear Our Prayer.”

Examples can be found on pages 19 & 20.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST (**omitted if wedding is without Mass*)

***Preparation of the Gifts**

(See page 7 for options to bring forward the gifts.)

***Prayer over the Gifts**

***Eucharistic Prayer**

The Lord's Prayer

Nuptial Blessing

***Exchange of Peace**

***Lamb of God**

***Communion Processional**

This song accompanies the procession as the assembly comes forward to receive communion. To enable their participation, it is best to choose songs with a refrain everyone can sing (those most familiar with the song may even do so without the aid of written music as they process); verses may be sung by the cantor and other leaders of song.

Suggested Communion songs:

I Am the Bread of Life WC 659

Ubi Caritas WC 849

We Have Been Told WC 851

Celebrating Years, WC 716 (Hymn to Joy)

Hear Us Now, Our God and Father WC 723

Happy You Who Fear the Lord WC 721

When Love Is Found WC 719

One Bread, One Body WC 687

Taste and See WC 690

Blest Are They WC 973

***Prayer after Communion**

CONCLUDING RITES

Final Blessing

The liturgy concludes with a final blessing prayer prayed by the priest and the presentation of the couple.

Presentation of the Couple

At this point in the ceremony, the presider will introduce you as a married couple for the first time. Let us Congratulate Mr. & Mrs. _____

Recessional or Song of Sending Forth

An instrumental selection is the strongest choice here; The music director will offer suggestions.



The readings at a Catholic wedding liturgy are a proclamation of God's Word and of the Church's faith about marriage. For this reason, they are limited to readings from the scriptures (the Bible).

You may find it helpful to reflect prayerfully on each reading and to choose those that speak to your hopes and dreams for your Christian marriage.

For commentary on the readings to assist your choice, you can go to foryourmarriage.org/catholic-marriage/planning-a-catholic-wedding/readings/

Old Testament Readings

Below are some options you can use for your first reading. If you have an Old Testament reading you like which is not listed here, please feel free to discuss that with your priest or deacon.

*A Reading from the Book of **Genesis 1:26-28, 31a** **

Then God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the ground." God created man in his image; In the image of God he created him; Male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying: "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth." God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good.

The Word of the Lord.

*A Reading from the Book of **Genesis 2:18-24** **

The Lord God said: "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him." So the Lord God formed out of the ground various wild animals and various birds of the air, and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them; whatever the man called each of them would be its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of the air, and all wild animals; but none proved to be the suitable partner for the man. So the Lord God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. The Lord God then built up into a woman the rib that he had taken from the man. When he brought her to the man, the man said: "This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called 'woman,' for out of 'her man' this one has been taken." That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.

The Word of the Lord.

*A Reading from the Book of **Tobit 8:4b-8** **

On their wedding night Tobiah arose from bed and said to his wife, "Sister, get up. Let us pray and beg our Lord to have mercy on us and to grant us deliverance." Sarah got up, and they started to pray and beg that deliverance might be theirs. They began with these words: "Blessed are you, O God of our fathers; praised be your name forever and ever. Let the heavens and all your creation praise you forever. You made Adam and you gave him

his wife Eve to be his help and support; and from these two the human race descended. You said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone; let us make him a partner like himself.’ Now, Lord, you know that I take this wife of mine not because of lust, but for a noble purpose. Call down your mercy on me and on her, and allow us to live together to a happy old age.” They said together, “Amen, amen.”

The Word of the Lord.

*A Reading from the Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31. **

When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls. Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an unfailling prize. She brings him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She obtains wool and flax and makes cloth with skillful hands. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her fingers ply the spindle. She reaches out her hands to the poor, and extends her arms to the needy. Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her a reward of her labors, and let her works praise her at the city gates.

The word of the Lord.

A Reading from the Song of Songs 2:8-10, 14, 16a; 8:6-7a

Hark! My lover—here he comes springing across the mountains, leaping across the hills. My lover is like a gazelle or a young stag. Here he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattices. My lover speaks; he says to me, “Arise, my beloved, my dove, my beautiful one, and come! O my dove in the clefts of the rock, in the secret recesses of the cliff, let me see you, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and you are lovely.” My lover belongs to me and I to him. He says to me: “Set me as a seal on your heart, as a seal on your arm; for stern as death is love, relentless as the nether-world is devotion; its flames are a blazing fire. Deep waters cannot quench love, nor floods sweep it away.”

The Word of the Lord.

A Reading from the Book of Jeremiah 31:31-32a, 33-34a

The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers: the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth from the land of Egypt. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer will they have need to teach their friends and relatives how to know the Lord. All, from least to greatest, shall know me, says the Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalms (To be sung by cantor)

Psalm 33: The Earth Is Full of the Goodness of God

The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

Your words, O God, are truth indeed, and all your works are ever faithful;
You love justice and right, your compassion fills all creation.
See how the eye of God is watching, ever guarding all who wait in hope,
To deliver them from death and sustain them in time of famine.
Exult, you just, in the Lord, for praise is the song of the righteous!
How happy the people of God, the ones whom God has chosen!
Our soul is waiting for God, for God is our help and our shield.
May your kindness, O God, be upon us who place our hope in you.

Psalm 34: Taste and See

Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

I will bless the Lord at all times, God's praise ever in my mouth.
Glory in the Lord for ever, and the lowly will hear and be glad.
Glory in the Lord with me, let us together extol God's name.
I sought the Lord, who answered me and delivered me from all my fears.
Look to God that you might be radiant with joy,
and your faces free from all shame.
The Lord hears the suffering souls, and saves them from all distress.

Psalm 103: The Lord is Kind and Merciful

The Lord is kind and merciful.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all my being bless God's name;
bless the Lord, and forget not God's benefits.
God pardons all your iniquities, and comforts your sorrows,
redeems your life from destruction and crowns you with kindness.
Merciful, merciful, and gracious is our God;
slow to anger, abounding in kindness.

Psalm 118

This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad.

Give thanks to the Lord, for God is good; God's mercy endures for ever;
Let the house of Israel say: "God's mercy endures for ever."
The hand of the Lord has struck with power, God's right hand is exalted,
I shall not die, but live anew, declaring the works of the Lord.
The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,
the Lord of love and mercy has brought wonder to our eyes!

Psalm 128: Blest Are Those Who Love You *

Blest are those who love you, happy those who follow you, blest are those who seek you O' God.

Happy all those who fear the Lord, and walk in God's pathway;

You will find what you long for; the riches of our God.

Your spouse shall be like a fruitful vine in the midst of your home,

Your children flourish like olive plants rejoicing at your table.

May the blessings of God be yours all the days of your life,

May the peace and the love of God live always in your heart.

Psalm 145

Our God is compassion to all creation.

The Lord is grace and mercy, slow to anger, full of love.

God is good to all creation; full of compassion.

Let all your works give thanks, O God. Let the faithful bless you.

The eyes of all are filled with hope; you give them all they need.

The Lord is just in ev'ry way, full of love for all.

God is near to those in need, who call out from their hearts.

New Testament Readings

Below are some options you can use for your second reading. If you have a New Testament reading you like which is not listed here, please feel free to discuss that with your priest or deacon.

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the **Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39**

Brothers and sisters: If God is for us, who can be against us? He did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all; will he not also give us everything else along with him? Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who acquits us. Who will condemn? It is Christ Jesus who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? No, in all these things, we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the **Romans 12:1-2, 9-18**

I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect. Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality. [Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Have the same regard for one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own estimation. Do not repay anyone evil for evil; be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, on your part, live at peace with all.]

The Word of the Lord.

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the **Romans 15:1b-3a, 5-7, 13**

Brothers and sisters: We ought to put up with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves; let each of us please our neighbor for the good, for building up. For Christ did not please himself. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think in harmony with one another, in keeping with Christ Jesus, that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Word of the Lord.

A Reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the **Corinthians 12:31-13:8a**

Brothers and sisters: Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts. But I shall show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interest, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

The Word of the Lord.

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the **Ephesians 5:2a, 21, 25, 28-32**

Brothers and sisters: Live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us. Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church and handed himself over for her. So also husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the Church, because we are members of his Body. For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the Church.

The Word of the Lord.

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the **Philippians 4:4-9**

Brothers and sisters: Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you.

The Word of the Lord.

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the **Colossians 3:12-17**

Brothers and sisters: Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgive one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one Body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The Word of the Lord.

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the **Hebrews 13:1-4a, 5-6b**

Brothers and sisters: Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels. Be mindful of prisoners as if sharing their imprisonment, and of the ill-treated as of yourselves, for you also are in the body. Let marriage be honored among all and the marriage bed be kept undefiled. Let your life be free from love of money but be content with what you have, for he has said, I will never forsake you or abandon you. Thus we may say with confidence: The Lord is my helper, and I will not be afraid.

The Word of the Lord.

A Reading from the First Letter of **John 3:18-24**

Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. Now this is how we shall know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us. Those who keep his commandment remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit that he gave us.

The Word of the Lord.

A Reading from the First Letter of **John 4:7-12**

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only-begotten Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another. No one has ever seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us.

The Word of the Lord.

A Reading from the Book of **Revelation 19:1, 5-9a**

I John, heard what sounded like the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying: "Alleluia! Salvation, glory, and might belong to our God." A voice coming from the throne said: "Praise our God, all you his servants, and you who revere him, small and great." Then I heard something like the sound of a great multitude or the sound of rushing water or mighty peals of thunder, as they said: "Alleluia! The Lord has established his reign, our God, the almighty. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory. For the wedding day of the Lamb has come, his bride has made herself ready. She was allowed to wear a bright, clean linen garment." (The linen represents the righteous deeds of the holy ones.) Then the angel said to me, "Write this: blessed are those who have been called to the wedding feast of the Lamb."

The Word of the Lord.

Gospel Readings

Matthew 5:1-12a

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.”

Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus said to his disciples: “You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lamp stand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.”

Matthew 7:21, 24-29

Jesus said to his disciples: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined.” When Jesus finished these words, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

Matthew 19:3-6 *

Some Pharisees approached Jesus, and tested him, saying, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause whatever?” He said in reply, “Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator made them male and female and said, for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, man must not separate.”

Matthew 22:35-40

One of the Pharisees, a scholar of the law, tested Jesus by asking. “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”

Mark 10:6-9 *

Jesus said: "From the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate."

John 2:1-11 *

There was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you." Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter." So they took it. And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from (although the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.

John 15:9-12

Jesus said to his disciples: "As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I love you."

John 15:12-16

Jesus said to his disciples: "This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you."

John 17:20-26

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said: "I pray not only for my disciples, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me. Father, they are your gift to me. I wish that where I am they also may be with me, that they may see my glory that you gave me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, the world also does not know you, but I know you, and they know that you sent me. I made known to them your name and I will make it known, that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them."

Examples of Universal Prayers

[PF1]

- That Jesus will bless the covenant of **N. & N.** as he chose to sanctify marriage at Cana in Galilee, let us pray to the Lord.
- That they be granted perfect and fruitful love, peace and strength, and that they bear faithful witness to the name of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- That the Christian people may grow in virtue day by day and that all who are burdened by any need may receive the help of grace from above, let us pray to the Lord.
- That the grace of the Sacrament will be renewed by the Holy Spirit in all married persons here present, let us pray to the Lord.

[PF2]

- For this bride and groom, and for their well-being as a family, let us pray to the Lord.
- For the relatives and friends of **N. & N.**, and for all who have assisted this couple, let us pray to the Lord.
- For young people preparing to enter Marriage, and for all whom the Lord is calling to another state in life, let us pray to the Lord.
- For all families throughout the world and for lasting peace among all people, let us pray to the Lord.
- For all members of our families who have passed from this world, and for all the departed, let us pray to the Lord.
- For the Church, the holy People of God, and for unity among all Christians, let us pray to the Lord.

[PF3]

- For Church leaders, that they may lead us to deeper faith in God and a stronger love for others, let us pray to the Lord.
- For our president and all leaders of government that they may be effective in achieving peace and eliminating poverty, let us pray to the Lord.
- For married persons that they may continue to give, be able to forgive, and find happiness deepen with the passing of each day, let us pray to the Lord.
- For **N.** and **N.**, now beginning their life together, that they may have divine assistance at every moment, the constant support of friends, the rich blessing of children, a warm love reaching out to others, and good health until a ripe old age, let us pray to the Lord.
- For those who are sick, lonely, discouraged, or oppressed that they may be strengthened by God's help and aided by their friends, let us pray to the Lord.
- For those who have died from the families of **N.** and **N.**, especially _____, that they may enjoy perfect happiness and total fulfillment in eternal life, let us pray to the Lord.

[PF4]

- That all Christians may reflect Jesus's love, and thus inspire their neighbors to a more generous life, we pray to the Lord.
- That world and national leaders may promote what is necessary for strong and stable family life in today's society, we pray to the Lord.
- That the marriage of **N.** and **N.** be a blessing for their families, their friends, their neighbors, and their faith community, we pray to the Lord.
- That this day of marriage may be filled with wonder and, in time, be a source of inspiring and happy memories, we pray to the Lord.
- That God may assist all married couples and give them joy, we pray to the Lord.
- That all of us gathered here be filled with a spirit of love and respect, kindness and generosity, patience and forgiveness, we pray to the Lord.

[PF5]

- For Christians of all traditions, that all who follow Christ may live in the unity for which Christ prayed, we pray to the Lord.
- For the parishes of which **N.** and **N.** have been a part: (here name the churches where you were baptized, where you celebrated First Communion and Confirmation, and other parishes of which you have been a part), let us pray to the Lord.
- For our nation and this city, and for those who serve in our government, let us pray to the Lord.
- For the parents and families of **N.** and **N.**, for their godparents (here you may name your godparents), and for all who formed them in faith, we pray to the Lord.
- For the deceased relatives of **N.** and **N.** (here you may name deceased relatives), and for all who are sick or suffering, we pray to the Lord.
- For safe journeys home for all who have traveled to be here, we pray to the Lord.

