

## *Handy Wedding Hints*

*Please read this page carefully as it will help you prepare for the rehearsal!*

- **Options:** Since there is considerable room for personal choice within the present Catholic Rite of Marriage (selection of Readings, Hymns, Prayers of the Faithful, Offertory procession, etc.) the couple should plan their wedding in conjunction with the celebrant. It can be useful to observe another wedding ceremony or read a booklet on weddings for ideas.

- **Arrival at the Church:** Groom and best man should be at least fifteen minutes early. They should meet with the celebrant and see that everything is ready. Distribute Wedding booklet if required. The bride should leave home early enough so that the wedding may start at the appointed time. It is very tedious for the guests to be left waiting for 20-30 minutes as sometimes happens!

- **Procession to altar:** The Bride, preceded by her bridesmaids, is usually escorted by her father whose right arm she takes as she walks up the aisle. The Groom is waiting at the top right-hand pew. Both proceed to the altar where they are welcomed by the celebrant, who leads them to their places near the altar. They now make the Verbal Declaration in the hearing of their witnesses, as required by Irish civil law.

- **Beginning of Mass:** After some words of welcome to the congregation the couple each light their individual marriage candle. From start of the Mass until the Opening Prayer all kneel. Sit for the Scripture Reading/s which are normally read by friends of the couple. Stand for the Gospel and sit again for the sermon.

- **Marriage Vows:** Immediately after the sermon comes the Rite of Marriage. Bride and Groom should be familiar with the formal questions about their intention to marry and the formula of consent, which they pronounce with loud and clear voices, audible to the congregation. Bride and Groom usually hold hands as they exchange vows.

- **Exchange of Rings:** The Groom takes the Bride's hand, and with the ring, touches each finger in turn, while he says 'X wear this ring as a sign of our faithful love, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, finally slipping the ring onto her ring finger. (The Bride then does the same for him).

- **The Prayers of the Faithful:** Can be said by friends of the couple, and can be freely composed or, according to the model in the rite, read from a script. Otherwise, they can be said by the priest.
- **Offertory Procession:** Bread and Wine for Mass can be brought to the altar by the parents of the couple, usually their mothers. The priest will tell them when to come up.
- **Communion:** Bride and Groom receive Holy Communion after the priest. Then those who are to receive Communion approach as usual.
- **Signing the wedding register:** This can be done in public at the end of Mass, or in the sacristy. Parents and immediate family may wish to come to witness this signing.
- **Musician:** You could ask your musician to commence playing ten minutes before the appointed time in order to calm and quieten the assembled guests.