



*The Holy Sacrament  
of Marriage*

*Celebrated at*

*Holy Saviour Parish  
Norristown, Pennsylvania*

# Holy Saviour Parish

Norristown, Pennsylvania



Dear Friends,

The priests and staff of Holy Saviour Parish rejoice with you at the announcement of your engagement. Congratulations! Now that you have come to us to arrange your wedding celebrations, we are pleased to assist you in the preparation process. This is a sign that your faith is important to you, important enough that you wish to stand before family and friends to express that faith through your marriage vows.

This booklet has been prepared to assist you in your preparation. It will inform you about the guidelines and canonical requirements of the Catholic Church as well as the policies that apply to our Parish in particular. The Catholic Church has a rich tradition of acknowledging significant events in our lives through our liturgical worship. Your wedding is one of those important moments when we gather as a community of faith—family and friends—to celebrate and to praise God. We wish to assist you in planning your wedding liturgy, for it is your own investment in the preparation that will afford you the opportunity to express your special love and faith.

Hospitality is a hallmark which we as a parish strive to accomplish. We welcome you and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Monsignor Charles L. Sangermano, Pastor

## **Rectory**

407 East Main Street • Norristown, PA 19401  
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## Marriage Preparation Process at Holy Saviour Parish

When a couple seeks to be married in the Catholic Church, they are availing themselves of a precious gift. The community of the Church recognizes that they are responding in faith to an invitation and call from God. As Christians, the gift of this love of God is a sacrament.

Since Catholics believe that the marriage of Christians is a sacrament and is a very serious relationship, a decision to make this life-long commitment requires sufficient reflection, discussion and responsible preparation. Therefore, the celebration of this sacrament is preceded by a period of preparation. You are entering a period of discernment to marry. The Church and the priests are also discerning along with you. This discernment period has a threefold nature: Personal and Relational, Communal, and Liturgical.

**Personal and Relational:** You as the bride and groom are the minister of the Sacrament of Marriage. You are the ones who celebrate. The priest witnesses on the part of the Church and State that your marriage is proper and legal. It is important to build a friendship and relationship with the priest prior to your wedding. This relationship is reflective not only of the relationship you will share in community as husband and wife, but also with the Church as a whole.

**Communal:** Marriage by its very nature is a public celebration. There is no such thing as a private wedding. Many couples often say, “it’s my wedding,” and in one sense, it is true because you are the one entering into marriage. In another sense, however, this notion should never imply that you, as bride and groom, are the only ones involved. The Church, both on earth and in heaven, the state, and your families are all involved and rejoice with you. In addition to the priest, there are other people from the parish who will assist you in planning your wedding.

**Liturgical:** Every thing we do liturgically expresses the relationship we share with God. Ritual helps us to put into action our beliefs about God. There are many choices you have in planning. The priest and others are here to guide and assist you. Our best expression of faith is shown when the community gathers to pray. We ask you to respect our parish wedding policy.

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia requests that all presenting themselves for marriage do so at least six months before their intended wedding date. This requirement is to ensure the necessary time to make all the arrangements.

## The Steps You Need to Take

**Step One:** Consult one of the parish priests. It is very important that you (the bride and groom) take the initiative to meet with the priest, and make the initial arrangements. At this meeting, the priest will ascertain one's freedom to marry, schedule a wedding date and briefly review the wedding program of our parish. It is our parish policy that either the bride or groom be from the parish in order to celebrate the wedding at Holy Saviour Church.

**Step Two:** Make arrangements for a Marriage and Family Life Preparation Program, sometimes called Pre-Cana. It is the Church's desire to strengthen your relationship and help you to discover the tools necessary for a good Christian marriage. Pre-Cana is one of the first things you should do following your engagement. The earlier the better, however, you should complete this program at least 4 months before your wedding date.

You have a few options in this area.

A. *Holy Saviour Pre-Cana Sessions (Small Group)*

This is a series of lectures and presentations regarding such topics as communication, sexuality, and the sacrament of marriage. We offer this program two times a year, usually on a Sunday in October and April. The cost is \$60.00. More information regarding dates may be obtained by the parish priest assisting you with your wedding plans.

- To register for our Parish Pre-Cana Session, kindly contact, Leti and Lenny Martelli at 610-960-7662. This session is held at our mission church, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Blackhorse, PA.

B. *Archdiocesan sponsored Pre-Cana Regional Sessions (Large Group)*

This is a series of lectures given four nights for two or four weeks. This must be presented to our parish priest as part of your preparation. Seating is limited, so early registrations are encouraged. There is an \$85.00 per couple fee for these sessions. Schedules and registration forms are available at the rectory. Programs are offered in various archdiocesan locations throughout the year. This program includes FOCCUS, marriage readiness inventory.

C. *Catholic Engaged-Encounter Weekend*

This is a weekend away at a retreat center with other engaged couples. This experience is designed to give couples who are planning marriage the opportunity to communicate individually, honestly and intensively about their prospective lives together. In face-to-face discussion, they will take an in depth look at their strengths and weaknesses, desires, ambitions, goals; their attitudes about money, sexuality, children, family, and their roles in the Church and society. Couples who are not yet engaged but are dating seriously are also invited to attend. The weekend begins Friday evening and concludes Sunday afternoon. Engaged Encounter Weekends are conducted at several retreat centers in the area. For more information, call the Archdiocesan Family Life Office at 215-587-5639

*D. Private Sessions for Marriage and Family Life with a Licensed Counselor.*

This type of Marriage and Family preparation program is sometimes recommended to a couple. It is convenient for those who are unable to attend the diocesan or parish sessions. At times, this is also requested if special circumstances surround an intended wedding.

- Attendance by both the Bride and the Groom in a Marriage and Family Life Preparation Program (Pre-Cana) is mandatory for our engaged couples planning to marry at Holy Saviour Church. For those attending a session other than our parish session, you will need to present the certificate of participation to the priest assisting with your wedding.

**Step Three:** Meet for the pre-nuptial investigation. This is an interview done with the priest and the bride and groom individually prior to the wedding. It is your statement of intention to enter into a marriage that is faithful, fruitful and forever. Also, at this time all of the required documents are collected, and there is a discussion about the wedding liturgy and other details. This meeting generally takes place within three months of your wedding date.

**Step Four:** Attend your wedding rehearsal. The parish priest schedules the date and time for your rehearsal. This is usually held on the Wednesday or Friday evening before the wedding day. Promptness on the part of the wedding party is expected. If a visiting priest is coming for your wedding, he is expected to take the rehearsal. Generally, on the night of your rehearsal, the couple is asked to present to the priest both the parish fees and the wedding license, unless other arrangements are made in advance with the parish priest assisting you with your wedding. Please see, *On the Night of Your Rehearsal* in the back of this booklet for more details.

- **Regarding Confessions at the Rehearsal**  
Before the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage, we suggest that the bride and groom (so long as they are Catholic) should avail themselves to receive the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. If you or those in your wedding party need to go to Confession before the wedding, we suggest that you do so prior to the rehearsal. However, during the night of the rehearsal, we would not refuse those who present themselves for this sacrament.

## Some Requirements in Preparing for your Wedding

### A. Documents Needed

- Baptismal certificates dated within six months of your wedding are required for both catholic parties, unless baptized at Holy Saviour Church. If one of the parties is non-catholic, proof of baptism is required.
- If you have been married before, regardless of your religion, you will also need a proper certificate of death of your former spouse, or a Decree of Nullity from the Catholic Church. These documents are to be original copies, as photocopies are not acceptable.

### B. Marriage License

Your license can be obtained at any county courthouse I Pennsylvania and is to be presented to the parish priest preparing you for marriage. Kindly follow the request the priest as to when the license is to be presented to him. Out of state licenses are not valid. Generally, the county licenses are valid for sixty days after they are issued, so please do not apply for them earlier than 60 days prior to your wedding date. It is asked by the County that both parties are to appear in person when making application for a marriage license. You are asked to present proof of identification and age through one of the following items: birth certificate, driver's license, passport, or Pennsylvania non-driver's license. If either party has been divorced or widowed, they will need to present a copy of the divorce decree or death certificate. As of June 25, 1997, the State of Pennsylvania does not require a blood test or premarital physical examination when applying for marriage license.

- For your consideration:

Montgomery County Court House is located at Main, Airy and Swede Streets, Norristown, 610-292-4965. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM. The cost is \$40.00, and they accept cash only as payment for service.

### C. Music at your Wedding

The Sacrament is enhanced by the use of liturgical music. Whether a couple chooses a Nuptial Mass or Ceremony, music can help to focus the attention of those assembled and create a mood for prayer. Our policy regarding music is as follows: all music, even those pieces played as preludes or postludes, and all within the ceremony must be of a liturgical nature. The playing or singing of secular or popular love-style songs is not permitted. Mrs. Eleanor Griffin is the organist for weddings and she is at your service. To insure that she will be available on the date of your wedding, kindly call her at 610-584-4633.

There are parish cantors (Leaders of Song) available to help facilitate the singing at your wedding ceremony. More information can be obtained when you meet or speak with Mrs. Griffin.

Since we are proud of fine service and gifts of our parish organists and cantors, we ask that no outside organists or cantors be considered for your wedding celebration.

If you wish to have additional musicians, in accompaniment to the organ, you will need to obtain permission from Mrs. Griffin. She is a good resource for you to assist in selecting music that has both organ and other instrumental parts especially written for Church use. Our parish fees do not include or compensate any additional musicians and is the couple's responsibility.

### D. Fees

- The parish fee is \$300.00.

Concerning the parish fee: Please make your check payable to *Holy Saviour Church*. (You also may use cash.) Please include Marriage License along with the wedding offering. This is usually due the night of your wedding rehearsal. Please follow any further requests of the priest assisting you.

Concerning the expected time of payment for the parish organist and cantor, we ask that you contact Mrs. Griffin directly for this information. Her phone number is 610-584-4633.

It is customary to make a small offering of \$5.00 or \$10.00 to the servers who assist at the wedding celebration.

## Some Other Things You Need to Know

Your wedding is a public celebration of you and your family and friends here in our parish. We appreciate your cooperation in the following:

- **Whether to Celebrate a Nuptial Mass or Ceremony?**

*In answering this question for yourselves, we offer the following pastoral guidance:*

Ideally, the Church believes your marriage should take place within a Nuptial Mass, which has all the elements of any other Mass, with the inclusion of the Rite of Marriage following the Homily. The Nuptial Ceremony consists of two parts: Liturgy of the Word, which includes readings from Scriptures, the Proclamation of the Gospel, and Homily; and the Rite of Marriage.

Understand that both are valid and proper ways for you to celebrate your wedding in Church.

There may be some considerations, however, which may influence your decision (or the Priest's request for you) to choose to celebrate the Nuptial Ceremony instead of a Nuptial Mass. These may include:

- If one or other of you have not been attending Mass regularly over a fairly long period of time (something which we would expect you to correct!), you should consider having the Nuptial Ceremony instead of the Nuptial Mass.
- Likewise, if one of the parties is a non-Catholic, although a Mass is permitted in the case of the marriage with a baptized Christian, you may choose to have the Nuptial Ceremony, which would emphasize what unites us rather than what divides us.

Please keep in mind that only Catholics may receive Our Lord in Holy Communion, and Catholics who receive should be those Catholics who are properly prepared (including by confession when necessary) and practice their faith on a regular basis. This consideration may also influence your decision.

As with everything else, your Parish Priest is happy to assist you and help you come to a decision concerning the question of celebrating either the Nuptial Mass or Nuptial Ceremony.

- **Times for Weddings**

The times for weddings on Saturday begin as early as 10:00 AM and may be scheduled as late as 3:00 PM. Friday evening weddings are permissible, and the time is mutually determined by the couple and the priest. We always maintain a time of two-hours between weddings in fairness to all. Sometimes the availability of time will depend on previously scheduled weddings.



- **Photographers and Videographers**

Picture taking and video taping are permitted during the wedding. The taking of pictures, however, should not become a distraction from the liturgical ceremony. If possible, we suggest hiring a professional photographer and/or video camera operator. The photographer may not interrupt or stop the entrance procession and is not to enter the sanctuary at any time. Pictures may be taken from the choir loft. The staging or posing for pictures after the wedding liturgy is permitted in the Church, so long as the celebration had started in a timely manner, and no other parish appointments are upcoming. The photographer/video operator should meet the priest prior to the wedding when they arrive at Church. No additional lights are permitted. Please communicate this information to your photographer and others.

- **Flowers**

Flowers and other decorations are the responsibility of the couple. Consider sharing the flowers and expense with couples who will be married on the same day. Flowers presented and used for weddings are considered a gift to God and His Church, and therefore, should not be removed after the ceremony. You are free to use whatever florist you wish, so long as the arrangements themselves are not artificial.

- **Decorations**

If you wish to decorate the ends of the pews with flowers or bows, please note that the use of any kind of tape or wire is prohibited. They cause damage to the pews. Only clips or rubber bands are permitted. Please communicate this to your florist or family members. We do not allow any kind of candles or candle stands in the isle or attached to the pews or in the sanctuary area. Also when considering these things, please keep in mind that you should have someone available from your family to remove these things after the wedding.

- **Aisle Runners**

If you wish to use an aisle runner for your wedding celebration we have no prohibition against them. As with decoration considerations, we ask that you would kindly ask someone in the family to remove this from Church following the wedding. The aisle of Holy Saviour Church is 100 feet long and the aisle of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church is 50 feet long.

- **Reception Lines**

Reception lines should be planned for the hall and are discouraged in the vestibule of Church. This request is made because of the scheduling of other parish events.

- **Rice, Birdseed and Balloons**

We realize that these are a sensitive issue and we have no desire to put a damper on the happiness of your big day; but as we all know, we now live in the “age of the lawsuit.”— Churches included, and because there have been incidents around the Archdiocese which have resulted in lawsuits against the Church, our insurance company requests us to forbid the use of such times (Rice, Birdseed, Confetti, Rose Petals, and the like). We ask for your understanding and ask your families and friends to honor our request.

- **Alcoholic Beverages**

Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on Church property at anytime. This place is sacred and we wish to treat it with the dignity it deserves. We ask that the couple communicate this to the wedding party and to the chauffer, if a limousine is used. This is our request for all events that surround the wedding at Church.

- **Unity Candle**

We ask you to not make use of this.

- **Visitation to the Blessed Mother**

Our Blessed Mother may be honored in a special way at your wedding. We invite those who truly have a sincere devotion to make a visit to Our Lady following the blessing at the closing of Mass.

- **Interfaith Marriages**

We generally recommend that those who marry in an inter-religious marriage (that is, a Catholic who marries a baptized person, who is non-Catholic) celebrate the Wedding Ceremony. The Sacrament of Marriage is a sign of unity and love that God has for his creation. We recommend this because the Church does not allow interfaith communion. In this way, we would not offend anyone.

- **Wedding Booklets**

It is not necessary to construct a wedding booklet. Remember that the Liturgy is in the language of the people and everything is easily understood by them. Generally, we have found that booklets are more a distraction than a help. They take a great deal of time to prepare, can be costly, and they present a danger of being distracting, especially if the texts of the Readings are included in them—which they should not be. Although a booklet is not forbidden, if you choose to have a booklet, our parish provides an outline for the Nuptial Mass and the Nuptial Ceremony and you are asked to follow these outlines.

- **Visiting Clergy**

If you desire to arrange for a guest priest, you will need to provide the visiting priest's name and address as soon as possible, so permission and delegation may be granted for him to witness the wedding at our Church. Visiting priests are expected to attend the rehearsal.

- **Altar Servers**

Our parish altar servers are normally scheduled for all weddings at Holy Saviour Church. Should you have any special requests, i.e. family servers, neighbors or friends, please ask the priest for assistance. It is customary to make a small offering to the servers in the amount of five or ten dollars each. There are two servers assigned for each Wedding Ceremony or Mass.

- **Please Be On Time!**

Many beautiful weddings are ruined because of lateness. We ask that you please be considerate to everyone by being on time. In order to accomplish this, we strongly advise that you plan on the entire bridal party being in the vestibule five minutes before the wedding is to begin.

- **Stay With Us**

We certainly hope that you will be able to remain members of Holy Saviour Parish. Please advise the parish priest assisting you with your wedding if you will, as you must re-register as a new family in our parish. This is not done automatically.

We thank you for your cooperation in all of these matters. Please be confident of our prayers for both of you as you prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage. May God bless you!

The remainder of the booklet contains proper Readings from Holy Scripture for you to choose for your wedding celebration. We have also enclosed a helpful section, *On the Night of Your Rehearsal* for you to review. We ask that you kindly complete the few questions asked in this section before the night of your rehearsal, as it will ensure a smooth rehearsal.

## On the Night of Your Wedding Rehearsal

The following section is a worksheet and reminder of some particular things we request of you and your wedding party on the night of the wedding review. This is offered for your convenience.

*Some things to consider before your rehearsal:*

1. Before your rehearsal, you should have completed all necessary canonical requirements and paperwork with one of the priests of the parish, or the guest priest assisting with your wedding.
2. Your civil marriage license and church wedding fee are due no later than the night of your rehearsal, unless given to one of the priests beforehand. We thank you.
3. The wedding rehearsal begins promptly at the mutual scheduled time between you and the priest celebrant for the wedding. A reminder that if you are having a visiting priest celebrate your wedding, it is our expectation that he also would perform the rehearsal as well. Please be prompt.

**How many persons are in the Bridal Party?**

Groomsmen \_\_\_\_\_ Bridesmaids \_\_\_\_\_ Others \_\_\_\_\_

**Order for Procession**

Altar		
1.	_____	and _____
2.	_____	and _____
3.	_____	and _____
4.	_____	and _____
5.	_____	and _____
6.	_____	and _____
7.	_____	and _____
Vestibule Door		

Please use the above chart to order those members of your bridal party. This will save you a lot of time at the rehearsal. Please give this information to the Priest assisting you with the rehearsal. Also, we recommend that seven be the maximum number of participants, including children. We ask this for two reasons. First, our Sanctuary cannot ideally accommodate more than seven and second; this will ensure a timely procession.

**The Readings or Liturgy of the Word**

Readers: For a Nuptial Mass and Nuptial Ceremony, Readers are to be Catholic, and preferably Readers at Sunday Masses or other Church celebrations. They should be good speakers and not nervous, they should dress appropriately to be in the Sanctuary. Readers are not to read from separate pieces of paper, as this looks unseemly during the Liturgy. They are to be present at the Rehearsal to practice reading from the Ambo.

The Readers are:

- First Reading: \_\_\_\_\_
- Second Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Presentation of the Gifts of Bread and Wine**

At the discretion of the Priest-Celebrant, the gifts of the Mass may be presented. Gift-Bearers are needed only for the celebration of Mass. These people are to be Catholic, and in good standing with the Church. They should be people who are significantly related to the bride or groom. They should be people who are able and old enough to receive Holy Communion themselves. There are only two gifts: bread and wine, therefore, there is only to be two gift bearers.

- The Gift-Bearers are: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

The Gifts are located on the small table in front of the first pew in Church on the Sacred Heart side (or on the left side).

### **The Sign or Kiss of Peace**

This is done only within the context of Mass and it is not to be added to the Wedding Ceremony. This part of the liturgy is not intended to be drawn out too long with visits to everyone in the congregation. Therefore, we ask that the bride and groom first exchange the Sign of Peace with one another, and the Priest celebrant and then to their respective parents and grandparents. We ask that the wedding party not be visited at this time.

### **Reception of Holy Communion**

#### *FOR CATHOLICS*

As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion. We are encouraged to receive Communion devoutly and frequently. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should not be conscious of grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord without prior sacramental confession except for a grave reason where there is no opportunity for confession. In this case, the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, including the intention of confession as soon as possible. A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance is encouraged for all.

#### *FOR OUR FELLOW CHRISTIANS*

We welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Eucharist as our brothers and sisters. We pray that our common baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist will draw us closer to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions, which separate us. We pray that these will lessen and finally disappear, in keeping with Christ's prayer for us "that they may all be one."

Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Holy Communion. Eucharistic sharing in exceptional circumstances by other Christians requires permission according to the directions of the diocesan bishop and the provisions of canon law.

Members of the Orthodox Churches, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Polish National Catholic Church are urged to respect the discipline of their own Churches. According to Roman Catholic discipline, the Code of Canon Law does not object to the reception of communion by Christians of these Churches.

#### **FOR NON-CHRISTIANS**

We also welcome to this celebration those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. While we cannot admit them to Holy Communion, we ask them to offer their prayers for the peace and unity of the human family.

#### **FOR THOSE NOT RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION**

All who are not receiving Holy Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.

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#### **Presentation to Our Blessed Mother, Mary**

Our Blessed Mother may be honored in a special way at your wedding. We invite those who truly have a sincere devotion to make a visit to Our Lady following the blessing at the closing of Mass or a wedding Ceremony. Normally, a hymn is sung during this presentation. We ask that at the conclusion of the hymn, the bride and/or groom returns to their place in the Sanctuary.

#### **Recessional**

Following the dismissal by the Priest, the Bride and Groom exit the Church first, bridal party follows afterwards. During the recessional we ask that the bride and groom continue to their awaiting car. Remember, we ask that the receiving lines be held at the reception. If you have chosen to have pictures taken in Church following the wedding, we suggest that the entire wedding party process down the main aisle of Church to the vestibule area, and then immediately, make your way back into the Church via one of the side aisles. We ask that you be conscious of time following your wedding. Confessions are heard on Saturdays beginning at 4:00 PM. Please be mindful of completing the taking of pictures by 4:00 PM.

*“Tell your spouse  
that You love her or him  
more than your own life,  
because this present life is nothing,  
and that your only Hope is that  
the two of you pass through this life  
in such a way that, in the world to come,  
you will be united in perfect love.”*

*(Saint John Chrysostom)*

*This form of Grace before Meals may be prayed at the beginning of a wedding banquet.*

*My friends, let us pray.*

*Dear Father of us all,  
We praise you and give you glory on this special day.  
We thank you for the gifts you have shown to us:  
For the love you have given to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_,  
For the joy we are sharing,  
And for this banquet we are about to begin.  
Bless us Father, and the food and friendship we have  
Because of your love for us.  
Make us truly grateful for all your gifts to us.*



## **Texts for Use in the Marriage Rite and in the Wedding Mass**

### **Old Testament Readings**

*Choose One*

1. A reading from the book of Genesis (Gn 1, 26-28, 31)

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 divine image 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.

2. A reading from the book of Genesis (Gn 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 the 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.

## 3. A reading from the book of Genesis

(Gn 24, 48-51. 58-67)

The servant of Abraham said to Laban: "I bowed down in worship to the Lord, blessing the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right road to obtain the daughter of my master's kindman for his son. If, therefore, you have in mind to show true loyalty to my master, let me know; but if not, let me know that, too. I can then proceed accordingly." Laban and his household said in reply: "This thing comes from the Lord; we can say nothing to you either for or against it. Here is Rebekah, ready for you; take her with you, that she may become the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has said." So they called Rebekah and asked her, "Do you wish to go with this man?" She answered, "I do." At this they allowed their sister Rebekah and her nurse to take leave, along with Abraham's servant and his men. Invoking a blessing on Rebekah, they said: "Sister, may you grow into thousands of myriads; and may your descendants gain possession of the gates of their enemies!" The Rebekah and her maids started out; they mounted their camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and went of his way. Meanwhile, Isaac had gone from Beer-lahairoi and was living in the region of the Negeb. One day toward evening he went out in the field, and as he looked around, he noticed that camels were approaching. Rebekah, too, was looking about and when she saw him, she alighted from her camel and asked the servant, "Who is the man out there, walking through fields towards us?" "That is my master," replied the servant. Then she covered herself with her veil. The servant recounted to Isaac all the things he had done. Then Isaac took Rebekah into his tent; he married her, and thus became his wife. In his love for her Isaac found solace after the death of his mother Sarah.

## 4. A reading from the book of Tobit

(Tb 7,9-10, 11-15)

Tobiah said to Raphael, "Brother Azaraih, ask Raguel to let me marry my kinswoman Sarah." Raguel overheard the words; so he said to the boy: "Eat and drink and be merry tonight, for no man is more entitled to marry my daughter Sarah than you, brother. Besides, not even I have the right to give her to anyone but you, because you are my closest relative. But I will explain the situation to you very frankly. She is yours according to the decree of the Book of Moses. Your marriage to her had been decided in heaven! Take your kinswoman; from now on you are her love, and she is your beloved. She is yours today and ever after. And tonight, son, may the Lord of heaven prosper you both. May he grant you mercy and peace." Then Raguel called his daughter Sarah, and she came to him. He took her by the hand and gave her to Tobiah with the words: "Take her according to the law. According to the decree written in the Book of Moses she is your wife. Take her and bring her back safely to your father. And may the God of heaven grant both of you peace and prosperity"† He then called her mother and told her to bring a scroll, so that he might draw up a marriage contract stating that he gave Sarah to Tobiah as his wife according to the decree of the Mosaic law. Her mother brought the scroll, and he drew up the contract, to which they affixed their seals. Afterwards they began to eat and drink.

## 5. A reading from the book of Tobit

(Tb 8: 5-7)

On the wedding night Sarah got up, and she and Tobiah started to pray and beg that deliverance might be theirs. He 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.'

## 6. A reading from the Song of Songs

(Sg 2, 8-10, 14. 16; 8, 6-7)

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 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. 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.

## 7. A reading from the book of Sirach

(Sir 26, 1-4, 13-16)

Happy the husband of a good wife, twice-lengthened are his days; a worthy wife brings joy to her husband, peaceful and full is his life. A good wife is a generous gift bestowed upon him who fears the Lord; be he rich or poor, his heart is content, and a smile is ever on his face. A gracious wife delights her husband, her thoughtfulness puts flesh on his bones; a gift from the Lord is her governed speech, and her firm virtue is of surpassing worth. Choicest of blessings is a modest wife, priceless her chaste person. Like the sun rising in the Lord's heavens, the beauty of a virtuous wife is the radiance of her home.

## 8. A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah

(Jer 31, 31-32, 33-34)

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 there 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 kinsmen how to know the Lord. All, from least to greatest, shall know me, says the Lord.

## New Testament Readings

*Choose One*

1. A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans (Rom 8, 31-35, 37-39)

If God is for us, who can be against us? Is it possible that he who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for the sake of us all will not grant us all things besides? Who shall bring a charge against God's chosen ones? God, who justifies? Who shall condemn them? Christ Jesus, who died or rather was raised up, who is at the right hand of God and who intercedes for us? Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Trial, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or the sword? Yet in all this we are more than conquerors because of him who has loved us. For I am certain that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities, neither the present nor the future, nor powers, neither height nor depth nor any other creature, will be able to separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

2. A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans (Rom 12, 1-2, 9-18)

Brothers and Sisters, I beg you through the mercy of God to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you may judge what is God's will, what is good, pleasing and perfect. Your love must be sincere. Detest what is evil, cling to what is good. Love one another with the affection of brothers. Anticipate each other in showing respect. Do not grow slack but be fervent in spirit; he whom you serve is the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient under trial, persevere in prayer. Look on the needs of the saints as your own; be generous in offering hospitality. Bless your persecutors; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Have the same attitude toward all. Put away ambitious thoughts and associate with those who are lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. Never repay injury with injury. See that your conduct is honorable in the eyes of all. If possible, live peaceably with everyone.

3. A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor 6 13-15, 17-20)

The body is not for immorality; it is for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. God, who raised up the Lord, will raise us also by his power. Do you not see that your bodies are members of Christ? But whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun lewd conduct. Every other sin a man commits is outside his body, but the fornicator sins against his own body. You must know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is within the Spirit you have received from God. You are not your own. You have been purchased, and at what a price! So glorify God in your body.

## 4. A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians

(1 Cor 12:31-13:8)

Set your hearts on the greater gifts. I will show you the way which surpasses all the others. If I speak with human tongues and angelic as well, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong, a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and, with full knowledge, comprehend all mysteries, if I have faith great enough to move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give everything I have to feed the poor and hand over my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind. Love is not jealous, it does not put on airs, it is not snobbish. Love is never rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not prone to anger; neither does it brood over injuries. Love does not rejoice in what is wrong but rejoices with the truth. There is no limit to love's forbearance, to its trust, its hope, its power to endure. Love never fails.

## 5 . A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians (Eph 5: 2, 21-33)

Follow the way of love, even as Christ loved you. He gave himself for us. Defer to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives should be submissive to their husbands as if to the Lord because the husband is head of his wife just as Christ is head of his body the church, as well as its savior. As the church submits to Christ, so wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church. He gave himself up for her to make her holy, purifying her in the bath of water by the power of the word, to present to himself a glorious church, holy and immaculate, without stain or wrinkle or anything of that sort. Husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. Observe that no one ever hates his own flesh; no, he nourishes it and takes care of it as Christ cares for the church for we are members of his body. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cling to his wife, and the two shall be made into one. This is a great foreshadowing; I mean that it refers to Christ and the church. In any case, each one should love his wife as he loves himself, the wife for her part showing respect for her husband.

## 6. A reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians

(Col 3:12-17)

Because you are God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with heartfelt mercy, with kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another; forgive whatever grievances you have against one another. Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you. Over all these virtues put on love, which binds the rest together and makes them perfect. Christ's peace must reign in your hearts, since as members of the one body you have been called to that peace. Dedicate yourselves to thankfulness. Let the word of Christ, rich as it is, dwell in you. In wisdom made perfect, instruct and admonish one another. Sing gratefully to God from your hearts in psalms, hymns, and inspired songs. Whatever you do, whether in speech or in action, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus. Give thanks to God the Father through him.

## 7. A reading from the first letter of Peter

(1 Pet 3: 1-9)

You married women must obey your husbands, so that any of them who do not believe in the word of the gospel may be won over apart from preaching, through their wives' conduct. They have only to observe the reverent purity of your way of life. The affectation of an elaborate hairdress, the wearing of golden jewelry, or the donning of rich robes is not for you. Your adornment is rather the hidden character of the heart, expressed in the unfading beauty of a calm and gentle disposition. This is precious in God's eyes. The holy women of past ages used to adorn themselves in this way, reliant on God and obedient to their husbands—for example, Sarah, who was subject to Abraham and called him her master. You are her children when you do what is right and let no fears alarm you. Your husbands, too, must show consideration for those who share your lives. Treat women with respect as the weaker sex, heirs just as much as you to the gracious gift of life. If you do so, nothing will keep your prayers from being answered. In summary, then, all of you should be like-minded, sympathetic, loving toward one another, kindly disposed, and humble. Do not return evil for evil or insult for insult. Return a blessing instead. This you have been called to do, that you may receive a blessing as your inheritance.

## 8. A reading from the first letter of John

(1 Jn 3: 18-24)

Little children, let us love in deed and in truth, and not merely talk about it. This is our way of knowing we are committed to the truth and are at peace before him no matter what our conscience may charge us with; for God is greater than our hearts and all is known to him. Beloved, if our consciences have nothing to charge us with, we can be sure that God is with us and that we will receive at his hands whatever we ask. Why? Because we are keeping his commandments and doing what is pleasing in his sight. His commandment is this: we are to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and are to love one another as he commanded us. Those who keep his commandments remain in him and he in them. And this is how we know that he remains in us: from the Spirit that he gave us.

## 9. A reading from the first letter of John

(1 Jn 4: 7-12)

Beloved, let us love one another because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten of God and has knowledge of God. The man without love has known nothing of God, for God is love. God's love was revealed in our midst in this way: he sent his only Son to the world that we might have life through him. Love, then, consists of this: not that we have loved God, but that he has loved us and has sent his Son as an offering for our sins. Beloved, if God has loved us so, we must have the same love for one another. No one has ever seen God. Yet if we love one another God dwells in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us.

10. A reading from the book of Revelation

(Rev 19: 1, 5-9)

I, John, heard what sounded like the loud song of a great assembly in heaven. They were singing: “Alleluia! Salvation, glory, and might belong to our God.” A voice from the throne cried out: “Praise our God, all you his servants, the small and the great, who revere him!” Then I heard what sounded like the shouts of a great crowd, or the roaring of the deep, or mighty peals of thunder, as they cried: “Alleluia! The Lord is king. Our God, the Almighty! Let us rejoice and be glad, and give him glory! For this is the wedding day of the Lamb, his bride has prepared herself for the wedding. She has been given a dress to wear made of finest linen, brilliant white.” (The linen dress is the virtuous deeds of God’s saints.) The angel then said to me: “Write this down: Happy are they who have been invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb”.

## NOTES

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