

## APPENDIX:

### THE CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE IN ENGLAND AND WALES

The text below appears as an Appendix to the [Introduction for the Rite of Marriage](#) in the Ritual Edition for England & Wales.

#### I. Civil Requirements

(a) The rite of marriage as now drawn up by the Episcopal Conference for England and Wales retains, as did its predecessor, certain elements from the Sarum use (in the wording of the formula of consent): it also makes allowances for the integration into the sacramental rite of the civil requirements for the solemnization of marriage. To this end the Legal Declaration of Freedom, required by civil law, is incorporated in the questions addressed to the couple before their exchange of consent (n. 24), and the actual formula of consent now includes the wording required for civil validity (n. 25).

It is absolutely necessary that the legal declaration of freedom be made by both parties and in the following words: *I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I, A.B. (full name, including surname), may not be joined in matrimony to C.D. (full name, including surname).*

It is likewise necessary that for the civil validity of the marriage the formula of consent spoken by both parties must include the following words:

*I call upon these persons here present to witness that I, A.B. (full name, including surname), do take thee, C.D. (full name, including surname) to be my lawful wedded wife (husband).*

(b) If the priest celebrating the marriage is an Authorized Person in civil law, it is sufficient that the required words (as indicated in the text of the rite) be spoken before him. If he is not an Authorized Person then it is required for the civil validity of the marriage *either* that the civil Registrar be present while these words are spoken *or* that these words be repeated before the civil Registrar.

(c) When the sacrament is celebrated during Mass, it will often be necessary (if the priest is not an Authorized Person) for the signing of the civil register to take place before the Liturgy of the Eucharist proceeds (n. 29) In this case, the bridal party may go for this purpose to the sacristy or to a suitable side-chapel; or, if the circumstances suggest this, the register may be signed at a table near the sanctuary. Since the rubrics commend that at the offertory, the bride and bridegroom bring the bread and wine to the altar (n.30), this can suitably be linked with their processional return from the signing of the register.

## II. Pastoral Considerations

(a) Priests are urged to pay full attention to the principles laid down in nn. 5-7 above, concerning the preparation of couples for this sacrament, and to nn. 8-11, concerning the choice of rite. The rite for the celebration of this sacrament now includes a large number of options (readings; formula of the Nuptial Blessing; formula for the blessing of the rings; bidding prayers; prayer and preface of the Mass). It is strongly recommended that, wherever possible, the priest should choose beforehand with the couple the texts that are to be used at their wedding. Not only does this enable the ceremony to respond more precisely to the desires and circumstances of the particular couple; it also provides a most fruitful and acceptable occasion for pre-nuptial catechesis.

(b) Although no special honours are to be paid to any private persons or classes of persons (n. 10), it should be remembered that, very frequently, the love and self-sacrifice of the parents of the bride and bridegroom have done much to lay the foundations for the marriage that is being celebrated. Circumstances vary so much that no hard and fast rules can be given; but priests should see to it that the parents are encouraged to take full part in the ceremony, both in the traditional Giving Away of the Bride, and at such other moments as seem suitable, e.g., the blessing of the rings, the offertory procession. In this way the example of a happy and fruitful marriage (cf. nn. 3-4, above) can make its own contribution to the solemnization of the new marriage.

(c) When, on the occasion of a mixed marriage, a minister of another denomination takes part in the service, the relevant norms laid down by the Episcopal Conference should be observed, and the minister's participation should be carefully discussed and arranged with the minister concerned.