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# Rite of Marriage

## And More on Confessions During Mass

ROME, JUNE 17, 2008 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org) (<http://www.zenit.org>)).- Answered by Legionary of Christ Father Edward McNamara, professor of liturgy at the Regina Apostolorum university.

Q: I am getting married in Sydney on a Saturday in August. My fiancée and I have been preparing for the ceremony by going through the liturgical books with a fine-toothed comb. One thing in particular troubles us. In the *Ordo Celebrandi Matrimonium* (2nd edition, 1991) at No. 53 it says, “omittitur actus paenitentialis” — “the penitential rite is omitted.” Is this ordo in force? Why would the Church want to exclude the penitential rite? Does this mean the Gloria is excluded as well? I also have a copy of “The Complete Rite of Marriage” (approved for use in England and Wales) printed by the Catholic Truth Society, copyright 1976, founded on typical editions from 1969. This is a pamphlet plainly designed for use by couples to prepare their wedding, or maybe even by the congregation. The earlier “Complete Rite of Marriage” includes the penitential rites. I have another question. The 1991 ordo suggests some additions to the proposed readings: Proverbs 31:10-13,19-20,30-31; Romans 15:1b-3a,5-7,13; Ephesians 4:1-6; Philippians 4:4-9; Hebrews 13:1-4a,5-6b. Is it permissible to use these readings, provided that we use the approved translation? — T.F., Sydney, Australia

A: First of all it is necessary to note that in normal circumstances one may only use the liturgical books approved by the national bishops' conference. Therefore the preparation for the wedding should be based on whatever rite of marriage is currently in force in Australia. The Latin text, however, may be used everywhere.

Second, the Holy See has historically granted wide leeway to bishops' conferences to prepare the rites of marriage and funerals according to the particular traditions of each nation. For this reason there are sometimes significant variations among different national rites.

According to the Latin text the penitential rite is omitted. This is not something particular to marriage but is a regular practice in Catholic liturgy whenever there is a special rite at the beginning of Mass. For example, the penitential rite is also omitted when an hour of the Liturgy of the Hours is joined to Mass.

In the case of a wedding this special rite is the one in which the priest greets the future spouses using a set formula. If this omission is not foreseen in the established Australian ritual, then it need not be made.

The Gloria and Creed would be used only if they would normally be used on this day, for example, if the Eucharistic celebration were a Sunday Mass.

Since this wedding will be held on a Saturday and during Ordinary Time, there is no impediment to celebrating the full ritual Mass. This would also be the case if the celebration takes place as a “Sunday” Mass on Saturday evening provided that it is attended primarily by wedding guests.

If, however, the wedding coincides with a regular parish vigil Mass, then the Mass of the corresponding Sunday is celebrated. In this case one reading from the ritual of marriage may replace one of the readings of the day.

If the ritual Mass is to be celebrated along with its readings, then three readings may be chosen, even on a weekday. The extra readings suggested in the 1991 Latin text correspond to the lectionary and may thus be used if an official translation is available.

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#### Follow-up: Hearing Confessions During Mass

During our comments on hearing confession during Mass (see [June 3](http://web.zenit.org/article-22786?l=english) (<http://web.zenit.org/article-22786?l=english>)), I mentioned that this practice is common in some “Latino” communities. A reader took umbrage at this statement and wrote: “It is about the use of the word ‘Latino.’ Perhaps, [a] less insulting would be the word ‘Hispanic.’ After all, the Romans (of the Roman Empire, who spoke Latin) never set foot on America.”

It never crossed my mind that this word could be insulting to anyone, but then words can be tyrants or servants, depending on social contexts.

I admit that I chose the word as being the most apt for the context. I sought an expression that covered Spain, Portugal, Mexico, all Spanish-speaking Central and South American countries, and Portuguese-speaking Brazil.

The word “Latin America” leaves out the European motherlands, and “South America” omits Mexico and Central America. “Hispanic” was unusable because it ignored millions of Portuguese speakers. I thought about using “Iberian culture,” but this expression, while historically and culturally correct, is used almost exclusively in Spain.

Therefore I opted for “Latino.” I have friends from almost every one of the countries referred to, and they readily refer to themselves as Latin Americans without the slightest hint of its being a derogatory expression. Likewise the Holy See has a special office for coordinating with the bishops of this region called the Commission for Latin America.

A Spaniard or Portuguese would not spontaneously refer to himself as “Latino,” but he would accept that the term could be used to describe the common cultural and religious milieu shared with former colonies.

Another question from a Maltese priest referred to the place for hearing confession during Mass: “In a parish church, in the body of the church but somewhat hidden, a confessional has just been placed. Is it according to or against the spirit of the liturgy that during the Mass confession be celebrated in the church, even if the confessional is not seen by the faithful in the church? If the practice of hearing confessions in the body of the church during Mass is not according to some instruction or other, would it be acceptable if the confessional is, say, in the sacristy or in a room where confessions are also heard?”

I would suggest that if, as explained in the previous column, there is a true need for hearing confessions during Mass, then it is best done in a confessional within the body of the church so that those awaiting the sacrament can participate in as much of the Mass as possible. The sacristy is possible if those in line are waiting inside the church.

The confessional should be sufficiently soundproofed so that both priest and penitent can hear one another.

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Readers may send questions to [liturgy@zenit.org](mailto:liturgy@zenit.org) (<mailto:liturgy@zenit.org>). Please put the word “Liturgy” in the subject field. The text should include your initials, your city and your state, province or country. Father McNamara can only answer a small selection of the great number of questions that arrive.

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