

# The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony

Weddings are moments of great excitement! And they should be! The first moments of the scriptures recall the beautiful marriage of Adam and Eve. Jesus' first miracle takes place at a Wedding. Heaven is described in the Book of Revelation as a Wedding Feast... Weddings are a cause for great joy and, if you're looking at this page, you're probably thinking about being a part of one soon.

As with every other aspect of getting married, the ceremony requires thought and deliberate choices. If you'd like to be married at the Minor Basilica, **you'll need to contact one of our clergy even before setting the date of the event...** It's essential that you understand what preparations the Church requires of you before making any final plans... This is doubly so if either party has attempted marriage before. (More info on Annulments.) Please contact one of our clergy **eight to ten months (a year would be even better)** before even the tentative date. Please note that you must meet with our clergy even if you intend to be married by another priest or deacon.

This webpage has the link to our parish wedding policies. Please review the policies before meeting with our clergy for the first time.

## The Sacrament of Marriage

The very first commandment in the entire Bible is given by God to Adam and Eve together. The Lord says to them in the book of Genesis: *Be Fruitful and Multiply* (Gen 1:28). Marriage is inaugurated twice in that first book. Chapter 1 deals with time very broadly, Adam and Eve are created at basically the same time together in the image of our Lord. In Chapter 2, Adam is created first and notices in his Original Solitude that he is incomplete without someone to whom he can give himself completely. To reconcile this existential loneliness, God creates the woman Eve as the greatest of His creation from the side of Adam. Together, they form the first family.

In spite of their Original Sin, their marriage bond survives and after God purifies the entire Earth in the Great Flood, the bond of marriage survives - even when all other blessings are washed away. Marriage is the earthiest and the first of all the Sacraments and it is the most truly human. Marriage is a part of every book of the bible. It is the occasion for the first public miracle of Jesus and it is the occasion in which the bible ends - with Heaven being described as an eternal joyous wedding feast.

The sacrament itself is unique in that the Church does not bring it about, She merely witnesses it. The priest or deacon does not make the sacrament, the conscious, informed and deliberate decision of two of you - the spouses - to take one another in a full, free, faithful and fruitful marriage does.

That choice to set aside all else that could be is the beating heart of marriage. Romantic love is a great booster shot, but it's not marriage. Sex and physical intimacy are a constant support, but they're not marriage. Cohabitation and the stability of family is the stage on which life is lived out, but it's not marriage either. Marriage is the day to day living out of the choice to sacrifice all for the good of another - that's real love!

Remember, Adam wanted to give himself entirely to Eve, not to possess her. When Jesus talks about love in the Gospel of St. John, he talks about giving of oneself in sacrifice: *There is no greater love than that a man would lay down his life for his friend and if you love Me, keep My commandments.* Love is about what we are willing to give, not what we get. Pleasure and satisfaction and fulfillment will come and go, but a life well led ends in a trip through the pearly gates and a walk on streets made of gold! Without reference to heaven, marriage is just guilt-free sex and a tax break... Why else would the divorce rate be so high? When we realize that this life is merely a taste of that which is to come... When we realize just what God is really trying to reveal to us in marriage... When we put aside the selfishness of youth and take up the wisdom and maturity of the Gospel, we begin to see that marriage is a sign of God's love!

The Father loves the Son; the Son loves the Father; Their love for one another IS the Holy Spirit. A man loves his wife; a wife loves her husband; their love for one another becomes one flesh in their children! But... Only if that love is generous. New life can only arise when love is generous. If my spouse is only there to pleasure himself or to comfort herself or to make someone happy... then there's not much hope for a lasting marriage. Love is a habit of little sacrifices that we offer up freely for the beloved... You could be spending time doing something else, but you sacrifice every single other thing you could be doing to spend time together. You could spend your money on whatever you want, but you buy overpriced movie tickets to spend time together. You could let your mind wander at the end of a hard day, but you sacrifice that quiet to listen to the other. All parts of love boil down to the little choices that we make to sacrifice one thing for our beloved.

Love is a habit and marriage is a commitment to continue that habit of sacrificial love even when the emotional and the physical and even the mental faculties are not feeling it. Anyone who has been married can say that the feelings will rise and fall and come and go. But love is deeper than feelings. It's deeper than the physical pleasure or the mental companionship. It's almost more than the human mind can grasp... Love and marriage are both supernatural. Which makes sense because St. John, the beloved disciple, teaches us pretty bluntly *God is love!*

## **Requirements & Freedom to Marry**

Before a priest or deacon can witness and confirm your marriage, he must first investigate your "freedom to marry." He must be assured that both parties are of age and have not entered into other marriages before and have any necessary permissions from the bishop. He also has a moral obligation to encourage you and to exhort you to a real, serious and prayerful preparation for this great Sacrament.

## Requirements

Each prospective spouse must:

- Be of legal age.
- Be unmarried (or have obtained relevant decrees of nullity).
- Be separated by more than three degrees of sanguinity. (Basically, you can't be more closely related than "second cousins.")
- Have the physical and emotional ability to consummate the marriage.
- Be completely free of any pressure or manipulation to get married.
- Intend to enter into a permanent, lifelong marriage which can only be dissolved by death.
- Intend to be faithful to his or her spouse sexually and emotionally.
- Intend to welcome children, if possible.
- Intend to give unconditional consent to the marriage.

## Dispensations

A special permission must be obtained, if:

- One of the spouses is not Catholic.
- One of the spouses is not baptized.
- One of the spouses is related to the other by blood or marriage.

## Encouragements

- [Natural Family Planning](#) is a system for knowing when conception is possible. By tracking simple symptoms like temperature, a woman can know with amazing precision when sex can bring about pregnancy and when it can't. A couple, then, can plan their sexual lives accordingly. If you're ready to have a child, you know when to have sex. If you're not ready, you know when not to have sex. Conception is usually only possible for about 10 days each month. While it may seem absurd, periodic abstinence has been scientifically shown to be a great assistance for the emotional health of couples. By abstaining from sex for a week and a half each month, the couple must find other ways to enjoy intimacy. Romance and anticipation are encouraged and built up... Couples who practice NFP have about a 3% divorce rate. Couples who use condoms or birth control pills are over 55%... If you're looking for a way to really inject romance and passion into your marriage, you are strongly encouraged to look into Natural Family Planning - not Cosmo or Maxim.
- The Sacrament of Confirmation is not required of either spouse prior to marriage. It is, though, an excellent spiritual assistance and the marriage preparation meetings provide a great opportunity to "catch up" on this often ignored sacrament. Talk to your priest or to the Rector for more information.
- Dr. Gary Chapman's book [The Five Love Languages](#) provides a very helpful framework to assist in marital communication. His basic premise is simply that we each communicate our love to others in a certain way (which he calls a love language). He

points out five: Physical Touch, Words of Affirmation, Gift Giving, Quality Time and Acts of Service. Dr. Chapman argues that while we each show love in certain ways, we also receive it in certain ways. If one spouse showed love by giving gifts while the other spouse received love best by spending quality time... Then two people could be very much in love but feel unloved. His book is highly recommended for young couples who are learning about communication.

## Discouragements

- Cohabitation has become very common in our culture. Statistically, it's deadly for a marriage. Couples who live together before marriage have a more than 70% divorce rate. While it is not essential that couples preparing for marriage change their arrangements, you should be honest with your priest and tell him if you're living together. If possible, you should certainly stay in separate rooms or find other arrangements until after the wedding. This isn't about prudishness, it's about honesty. If your marriage is to be a witness, what is living together before the vows have been uttered or the commitment made?
- The sad truth is that sex has become banal and casual in our culture. We don't treasure it. What was once considered a beautiful gift to be given between spouses is now tossed aside whenever passion or emotions rise high. Sex is so highly valued by the Lord that eternity is described in terms of a wedding banquet... At the end of the Jewish wedding banquet, the couple would be escorted to their bedroom where the bed was carefully decorated and they would share themselves with one another for the first time. That consummation was the highlight of the wedding banquet. You may have already slept together. If you have, make a commitment not to be ruled by emotion or animal passion. Reclaim yourself and make ready to offer yourself to your spouse on your wedding night. Pre-marital sex is a sin and you can't make a spiritual preparation for your wedding when you're living in a state of ongoing, unrepentant sin.

## Costs

- In the course of your preparation, your priest will fill out a Basic Informational Form, a Logistics Information Form and a Pre-Nuptial Inquiry. He may also ask you to participate in an online marriage preparation tool. If you have previous marriages, he will discuss those with you as well. (Be aware that seeking an annulment for previous marriages can be a very lengthy process. Please visit with your priest about this before setting the wedding date.) The usual cost of the preparation materials is about \$50 - \$75. Those materials and others are already part of the fees for using the Church.
- When reserving the Church, a refundable deposit of \$100 is required to save the date. Parishioners are asked to donate an additional \$150 for the use of the Church and the corresponding preparation process. Non-Parishioners are asked to pay an additional \$400 for the use of the Church and the preparation. (A parishioner is an adult who attends Mass at the Minor Basilica at least twice a month or who is formally registered with the parish for at least one year on the date of the wedding.)

- Couples who would like to use the parish hall for dressing and preparation. The hall must be completely cleaned by Saturday evening at 8pm. The hall is available for Friday and Saturday weddings only. Use of alcohol or tobacco in the hall is prohibited without exception.
- Mrs. Rosemary Troquille is our church coordinator. Her fee is \$150, payable directly to her prior to the ceremony. She can be contacted at (318) 663-0235. Couples may hire an outside coordinator to help them with the reception and other details.
- All couples who will have music at their weddings are required to have a musician recognized and approved by the Rector.
- Photographers, Videographers, Florists and Decorators must agree to the policies outlined here.

## A Timeline

Your wedding preparation begins with a visit to the priest at least eight months before the wedding date. You'll want to find someone who can be real with you and who can help you to understand what you're undertaking and the challenges you'll face. At that first meeting, the basic investigation of your freedom to marry (*see above*) will take place. After a little getting-to-know-you, the priest will take care of several forms which allow him to determine your freedom to marry.

You'll continue to meet with your priest on a regular basis to discuss the meaning of Christian Marriage, the essential skills of communication and sacrifice, the practical responsibilities you have toward your spouse, your children and the ceremony itself.

At each meeting, you'll have the chance to ask questions and to clear up details you'll need to know as you plan your special day.

In the month prior to your wedding (at least a week before the date), you'll pick up your marriage license from the courthouse.

The day before, usually, you'll attend your wedding rehearsal where you and your bridal party will walk through the ceremony.

### The Big Day

Everyone should arrive at least an hour early. The groomsmen will usually wait in the sacristy near the main altar while the ladies will wait in the hall or some other location.

At the appropriate time, the grandmothers and mothers will be escorted down the aisle and seated.

Next, the wedding party will process to their pews. The Best Man and the Maid/Matron of Honor will go to their places in the sanctuary. The bride will process down the main aisle, and then be

escorted into the sanctuary by her husband-to-be. Once everyone is in their place, the priest will greet everyone and begin the ceremony with the opening prayers.

One or two readings from the Sacred Scriptures will be read and the psalm sung or recited. The priest will then read the Gospel and give his sermon.

After the sermon, he invites the wedding party into the sanctuary and begins the wedding ceremony proper. He first asks you to attest your right intentions. Then you'll face one another, join hands and make your vows to one another (the priest will speak the words one phrase at a time under his breath). At that point - you are married! He will then bless the rings and you will give them to one another. Finally, the intercessions are read and the wedding party returns to their pews.

If the Wedding Mass is to be offered, the Mass continues in the usual way with the Eucharistic Prayer and Holy Communion. After Holy Communion, certain cultural devotions may be observed. Couples commonly take flowers to the Altar of the Blessed Virgin asking for her intercession and then bring an additional flower to the mother of the groom and the mother of the bride respectively. While it is common among some Christians in this area, the unity candle is not used in the Catholic ceremonies.

If no Mass is to be offered, only the Our Father and Nuptial Blessing are prayed and Holy Communion is not distributed.

Either way, the ceremony ends with a special solemn blessing. Then, you are introduced for the first time as man and wife, you kiss and process out of the Church.

Typically, the signing of the license takes place immediately afterward and pictures follow.

## **Selected Practical Matters**

### **Sacred Music and Musicians**

Music will play a significant role at the wedding and at the reception. It has the ability to set our hearts and minds in the right mood to appreciate what is taking place - whether that be a religious ceremony or a romantic first dance.

The music appropriate to a religious ceremony is truly Sacred Music. It must be performed live (never from a recording) and, typically, must come from the list provided in this document. Secular (non-religious) music, even if it has religious themes, may never be used in the Church for any reason.

If you will be married at a Mass, you may provide music for each of these moments:

- Prelude(s)
- Procession of the Grandmothers and Mothers

- Procession of the Bridal Party
- Procession of the Bride
- The Gloria \*
- The Responsorial Psalm or Gradual \*
- The Offertory \*
- The Propers of the Mass (The Sanctus, Mortem Tuum, Amen and Agnus Dei) \*
- Holy Communion
- The Cultural Devotions
- The Recessional

*\* Requires a cantor to sing proper vocal texts.*

If you will be married at a ceremony without Mass, you may provide music for each of these moments:

- Prelude(s)
- Procession of the Grandmothers and Mothers
- Procession of the Bridal Party
- Procession of the Bride
- The Responsorial Psalm or Gradual\*
- The Recessional

*\* Requires a cantor to sing proper vocal texts.*

When meeting with your musician(s), you'll want to agree upon which pieces can be played or sung at each moment in the ceremony. Note that some moments require a vocal singer, but that all of those moments may be conducted without the use of music. An organist alone can accompany the Catholic wedding ceremony and Mass if needs be. Also note that while other orchestral instruments are allowed in the Church, they should be used in a truly sacred way. Recorded music is never allowable.

Typically, the preludes, processions and recessional are accompanied by organ music. The most common cultural devotion in the area is the presentation of flowers at the Altar of the Blessed Virgin accompanied by the Schubert Ave Maria.

The use of hymns is quite acceptable, especially at the Offertory, the Communion and the Cultural Devotions of the Wedding Mass. They are typically unnecessary for the wedding ceremony. The use of so-called "Praise and Worship" songs are typically not appropriate for the solemnity of the moment but may be used with the permission of the rector.

## **Approved Music**

*For the Prelude(s) any instrumental piece is acceptable. These are recommended:*

- Aria from the Suite in D, Bach ("Air on the G String")
- Bist Du Bei Mir, J.S. Bach ("If Thou Art With Me")

- Arioso, J.S. Bach
- Largo from Xerxes, Handel
- Arioso, Franck
- Aria on a Chaconne, Martinson
- Air and March from Water Music, Handel
- Pastorale, Wesley

*If vocal music is preferred any sacred piece is acceptable as a prelude. These are recommended:*

- The Lord's Prayer, Malotte
- Ave Maria, Schubert
- Ave Maria, Gounod
- Ave Maria, JS Bach
- United as One, Alstott
- On This Day, O Beautiful Mother, Lambilotte
- O Perfect Love, Greig
- Wedding Prayer, Dunlap
- I Love Thee, Greig
- Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee, Beethoven
- Bridal Prayer, Copeland
- Entreat Me Not To Leave Thee, Gounod
- Panis Angelicus, Frank
- Lord, Be Our Wedding Guest, Childs
- O Perfect Love, Sowerby

*For the Processions and Recessional:*

- Prince of Denmark March, J. Clarke
- Trumpet Voluntary, H. Purcell
- Trumpet Voluntary, J Stanley
- Rondeau, J. Mouret
- Canon in D, J Pachelbel
- Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring, JS Bach
- Rhosymedre, R. Vaughan Williams
- Pastoral Symphony No 13, GF Handel
- Aria, Flor Peeters
- Trumpet Sonata, H Purcell
- Air de Trompette, GP Telemann
- Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee, Beethoven
- Praise My Soul, the King of Heaven, J. Goss
- Te Deum, Chapantier

*For the Gloria, Responsorial Psalm, Gradual, Sanctus, Mortem Tuum, Amen and Agnus Dei*, any approved setting in English, Spanish or Latin may be used. For copies of these settings, please contact one of our parish musicians.

*For the Offertory and Communion:*

- Any Catholic Hymn, especially those which speak of the Holy Eucharist
- Any instrumental hymn
- Any Fugue or Motet, vocal or instrumental

*For the Marian Cultural Devotions:*

- Ave Maria, Schubert
- Ave Maria, Gounod
- Ave Maria, Bach

## **Proper Readings and Prayers**

Both the Wedding Mass and the shorter Wedding Ceremony include readings from the Sacred Scriptures. Both may also include a responsive reading from the book of Psalms.

Unless your wedding date has its own specially required readings (a rarity) , your priest will invite you to select a reading from the Old Testament and/or one from the New Testaments. You may also choose from a selection of psalms. Typically, the priest will reserve to himself the choice of the Gospel to be read. If you prefer not to choose the readings yourselves, the priest can choose readings for you.

At the wedding, these readings must be read by a Catholic. If you have a family member or friend who regularly reads the scriptures at their own parish, you are welcome to invite them to read one or more of these readings at your wedding. If not, the priest can read the scriptures for you.

## **Decor and Flowers**

The Church is architecturally beautiful without any decoration. Flowers should be seen as accents rather than set pieces.

Two large splays may be placed on the high altar behind the candlesticks. As many as four smaller splays may be placed on the side altars behind the candlesticks. Flowers may be placed on stands outside the Church after the parish Mass at 4p but never before. (Any decoration inside or outside the Church placed before the parish Mass will be discarded.) No other flowers may be used. Flowers used on the high altar must be donated to the parish and will remain on the altar through the weekend. All other decorations are to be removed immediately after the wedding.

No other decorations (bows, pillars, garlands, etc) are to be employed without the permission of the Rector.

Note that during the Advent and Christmas Seasons and the Lenten and Easter Seasons, decorations may be limited. Seasonal parish decorations are not to be modified.

## **Dresses and Modesty**

The Church certainly understands the challenge young women face today as objects of sexuality at every moment. We also understand how difficult it can be to find a beautiful and dignified dress at a reasonable price.

At the same time, the Christian witness of a marriage begins at the wedding. All dresses - for the bride and the bridal party - must be reasonably modest. While the shoulders may be bare, the bosom should be modestly covered and the length of the dresses be suitably tasteful. Many brides have found a happy solution in a shawl or shoulder covering for the ceremony which can be removed for photographs and the reception.

## **Attendants**

The purpose of the Wedding Party is to witness. They are friends who are gathered close for the moment of the exchange of consent and who attest to the truth of the event before everyone else.

Logistically, any given space can only accommodate so many people. Because of the size of our sanctuary, no more than five groomsmen, five bridesmaids, **one** Best Man and **one** Maid or Matron of Honor are recommended at Weddings celebrated at the Minor Basilica. Requests for more should be discussed with the Rector.

No child under the age of four (4) may participate in the ceremony.

It is traditional to have a number of ushers who will assist the mothers and grandmothers to their places. This is completely acceptable and encouraged. Please note that everyone who will process in the wedding party should be accompanied by one other individual of the opposite gender. The new custom of the groom escorting his mother down the aisle is not permitted.

## **Guests**

The church has a maximum seating capacity of 350 persons. If your guests exceed the fire marshal's capacity, they will be turned away for safety and legal reasons. Please keep this important fact in mind when developing your guest list.

## **Other Assistants**

The Wedding Ceremony and the Wedding Mass admit other helpers who may wish to be a part of the event but who are not able to stand in the Bridal party.

Lectors, mentioned above, may be admitted to read the Sacred Scriptures. A maximum of three adults may serve as Lector. Only Catholics may serve in this capacity.

Altar Servers (who presently serve regularly in their own parish) may be admitted to serve, provided they can be present at the rehearsal.

Non-Catholics may not assist with the ceremony itself, but may stand with the bridal party or serve as ushers.

Flower Girls and Ring Bearers are quite welcome provided that they are at least four (4) years old. Note that all flowers must be collected before the Church is cleared. Also, the ring bearer should not bear the actual rings - they should be kept by the best man during the ceremony. Children who serve as flower girl or ring-bearer may not carry anything other than a basket of flowers or a ceremonial pillow. The new custom of carrying signs or other tokens is not permitted.

Animals, other than certified service animals, are not allowed in the Church. No animals are allowed in the ceremony for any reason - the visually or otherwise impaired must be escorted by another attendant.

## **The Wedding Coordinator**

Every wedding which takes place at the Minor Basilica must have a wedding coordinator. The coordinator will unlock and lock the Church. He or she will assist with the rehearsal and the ceremony itself. Our in-house wedding coordinator is Mrs. Rosemary Troquille.

## **The License**

In Louisiana, the wedding license must be obtained at minimum 72 hours (but no more than 30 days) prior to the time of the wedding. You are asked to have the license in hand at least one week prior to the wedding. Bring the license to the priest at the rehearsal. The parish will take care of sending your final paperwork to the courthouse. You will be given a ceremonial certificate which is valid for honeymoon discounts.

## **Rehearsal**

The rehearsal typically takes place the evening before the wedding. If you will be inviting friends or family from out of town, invite them to arrive early to visit and catch up. The rehearsal should start promptly and last less than an hour.

In the Wedding Ceremony and the Wedding Mass, the couple have very little to remember. Once you arrive at the altar, you stay there until the end. The Priest will direct you to stand or kneel.

Only those people directly connected with the ceremony need to attend. It is preferable, but not required, that readers, servers and ushers attend in addition to the bridal party.

Because of the spiritual and Sacramental nature of what is about to take place, Catholics are strongly encouraged to go to confession before the wedding. Your priest will be happy to hear your confession at the rehearsal. If you would rather confess to another priest, please make the arrangements as near to your wedding as possible.

## **Alcohol**

The wedding ceremony is the public witnessing of the exchange of the vows of bride and groom. That exchange and witness requires consideration, deliberation and sober determination on the part of fiancées and witnesses alike. Therefore, **the entire wedding party is strictly forbidden from drinking any alcohol on the day of the wedding until the conclusion of the wedding ceremony.** The priest can and will exclude participation, up to and including, canceling the wedding if he believes that the exchange of vows and witness cannot be accomplished soberly and reverently.

*Please note that this is a deadly serious rule. No one wants to be the cause of embarrassment... But your priest cannot witness and bless an act which may be a farce because of a few drinks. There is to be no alcohol consumed by the bride, groom or party on the day of the wedding until the ceremony is concluded. Absolutely no exceptions.*

## **Photography**

Photographs may be taken prior to the ceremony, but must not interfere with regular Parish Masses and must conclude no less than thirty (30) minutes before the ceremony. For a Saturday 6pm Wedding, this means that pictures may be taken from after Mass (about 5pm) until 5:30pm. Please plan with your photographer accordingly. Photos may also be taken from Noon until 3p in the Church.

The wise couple will meet with the photographer in advance to plan the photographs to be taken in the Church after the ceremony. A well planned post-ceremony photo shoot will get everyone to the reception quickly. A poorly planned shoot can take a long time and be a great tedium on your happy day.

If you would like a photo with your priest, please plan to take that photo first so that he can remove his vestments and clear up the Church.

## FAQs

This section outlines several common questions that couples have asked our clergy in the past years. These suggestions are not binding and are left to your good judgment.

### **Should I invite the priest to the Rehearsal Supper? To the Reception?**

It's certainly courteous to invite your priest to be a part of your family and friends celebrations with you. This is doubly true if you have developed a relationship with your priest during the time of preparation. While it is good to invite your priest to these events, remember that the weekend is the busiest time of the week for Catholic clergy and that he may be unable to stay long or to attend at all. Still, most priests sincerely appreciate the invitation whether they can attend or not.

### **Should I give the Priest a gift or some money? What about the Altar Boys?**

Roman Catholic Priests are forbidden by law and conscience from charging for the sacraments. It's a sin called Simony. If you'd like to make a gift to your priest, you are welcome to do so. The priest will certainly appreciate it. But no, you are not bound or obliged to give him anything other than your best efforts to become a saintly family.

Altar Boys are a different story. These young men have put in real energy for your wedding and deserve some small token of appreciation. A small gift or a few dollars is appropriate.

### **Do I have to get confirmed before we get married? Do I have to become Catholic before we get married?**

The short answer to both questions is no. If you are a Catholic but were never confirmed, it's certainly a good idea to seek the Sacrament of Confirmation, but it is not necessary.

To the non-Catholic who may be interested in the Catholic Faith, you are very welcome to bring up the matter with your priest... It's better not to try the romantic "I'll become Catholic secretly and reveal it at the last minute" idea. It's just not workable. Still, don't be discouraged about considering that you both be of the same Faith. Parents who share the same Faith are much, much more likely to raise religiously aware and holy Children... Talk with your priest about these questions!

### **Why should I take advice about sex or marriage from an unmarried celibate?**

There are two kinds of knowledge: knowledge in theory and knowledge from experience. Undoubtedly, if you need knowledge of experience about sex or marriage, the one to talk to is person who's been married for years. But when it comes to the knowledge of the scriptures about what Jesus says marriage ought to be... Well, all the experience in the world isn't going to give the answer. Why? Because this world is limited and Jesus isn't. He sees as we cannot.

The priest is equipped with knowledge of what God wants for you. He's not likely to set himself up as an expert on the experience of marriage, but his words on the ideal of marriage as Jesus taught are worth a hearing!