Choosing the Scripture readings for your Marriage

Where to begin?

Whether your marriage is taking place within Mass or not the guidance with regard to choosing readings is the same, and is given below.

If the Order of Matrimony is celebrated within Mass on certain days of the Year the readings (and prayers) must be taken from the Mass of that day. These days include the Solemnities (for example the Immaculate Conception and Assumption), the Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter, and Easter Week.

Otherwise you are free to make your selection of readings from the texts provided. It is not permitted to substitute other readings or songs in their place.

At least one of the readings you choose must be from those which speak explicitly of Marriage. These readings are marked with an asterix, eg on page 3. 801-1*

If there are to be three readings

- the first is to be taken from the Old Testament (pages 3-13 in the accompanying document), except during Eastertime when the first reading may be from the *Book of Revelation* (page 29)
- the second is to be taken from the New Testament (pages 16-31)
- the third is to be taken from the Gospels (page 38 to 49)

If there are to be two readings

- the first is to be taken from the Old Testament (pages 3-13 in the accompanying document), except during Eastertime when the first reading may be from the *Book of Revelation* (page 29)
- OR from the New Testament (pages 16-31)
- the second is to be taken from the Gospels (page 38 to 49)

Psalm

The Psalm is to be taken from the selection on pages 30-36.

It is good to ensure there is a certain consistency of theme between the psalm and the reading which precedes it.

The Psalm may be sung, or recited by congregation.

Gospel Acclamation

The Acclamation is to be taken from the selection on page 37.

It is good to ensure there is a certain consistency of theme between the Gospel Acclamation and the reading from the Gospel which follows it.

The Gospel Acclamation should be sung.

Exceptionally, when a Catholic marries a non-Christian or a Catechumen (ie someone preparing for baptism), it may be judged most appropriate to have only one reading. That one reading should be chosen from the Gospel readings provided.

There are so many readings to choose from. Where to start?

Hopefully you can allow yourself plenty of time for this preparation. In which case make the most of that time, by slowly reading through all of the readings that you can choose from.

Maybe read one or two a week: make the reading part of your daily prayer. Each reading has something to say about love, marriage, faith, life. To take your time and pray with the readings is a fruitful way of spiritual preparation for marriage, and not only a helpful way to select the readings for your wedding day.

Each reading is taken from Scripture, the living word of God. God speaks in and through Scripture and we have the opportunity as we listen to learn something more of his love and care.

Some of the readings provided are likely to be very familiar, and others may be unfamiliar. Some may be immediately attractive, and others quite challenging or even seem discouraging. Yet all of them have something to say to us, about love, faith, marriage, life.

Indeed, sometimes, when we give time for the scripture to speak to us, it turns out to be a reading that is not immediately attractive that proves to have the most to say to you and that you will want to hear on your wedding day.

Make a note of your response to the readings as you make your way through them, so that you can refer to your notes when making a final choice.

Who chooses? The bride or the groom?

Hopefully both will play their part!

One way of proceeding is for each of you to have a copy of the readings to choose from – and for each of you to use them as described above as part of your daily prayer.

Then from time to time to compare notes with each other. As well as helping you make your final choice of readings, the conversation can prove a helpful time to learn still more from each other about your hopes and ambitions for your married life together.

The process will help make sure that the readings you choose are ones that really offer help and encouragement to you personally, and your marriage.

The gift that keeps on giving

Taking time over the choice of Scripture readings is perhaps the most important way to ensure that your wedding service is made to measure, best suiting you and your circumstances.

When you have chosen your readings, you can make your other choices – of prayers, and songs etc – to complement and reflect those readings. Doing this can help the Liturgy as a whole speak as it were with one voice. It will speak God's living word and be the prayer of the Church, and be personal and particular to yourselves as a couple.

Having that clear focus for the choices or readings, songs, prayers will also help and guide your family and friends in the prayer they will want to offer for you on your wedding day and in the years that follow.

Share your decisions with the ministerwho will preside at your wedding

When you have made your choice together, do share your reasons for choosing those particular readings with the priest or deacon who is assisting you. This will be a great help to them when they come to prepare the homily for the wedding service. Again this will help ensure what is said truly engages with you and your hopes for your married life.

For the Celebration of Marriage

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The passages that follow may be used in the Mass For the Celebration of Marriage and in the celebration of Marriages without Mass. At least one reading that explicitly speaks of Marriage must always be chosen. These readings are designated by an asterisk.

Whenever Marriage Anniversaries are celebrated on a day when Masses for Various Needs and Occasions are permitted, the same readings may be used as below in the celebration of Marriage; the readings may also be taken from the Mass of Thanksgiving (943-947).

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801 Reading from the Old Testament

801-1*

Genesis 1:26-28, 31a
'Male and female he created them.'

A reading from the Book of Genesis.

26 God said,
'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.
And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea,
and over the birds of the heavens,
and over the livestock and over all the earth
and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'

27 So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

28 And God blessed them.
And God said to them,
'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it,
and have dominion over the fish of the sea
and over the birds of the heavens
and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'

31 And God saw everything that he had made,
and behold, it was very good.

The word of the Lord.

Genesis 2:18-24

'And they shall become one flesh.'

A reading from the Book of Genesis.

18 The LORD God said,
'It is not good that the man should be alone;
I will make him a helper fit for him.'
19 Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed
every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens
and brought them to the man to see what he would call them.
And whatever the man called every living creature,
that was its name.
20 The man gave names to all livestock
and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field.
But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.
21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man,
and while he slept took one of his ribs
and closed up its place with flesh.
22 And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man
he made into a woman and brought her to the man.
23 Then the man said,
'This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man.'

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother
and hold fast to his wife,
and they shall become one flesh.

The word of the Lord.

Genesis 24:48-51, 58-67

'Isaac loved Rebekah and was comforted after his mother's death.'

A reading from the Book of Genesis.

In those days: The servant of Abraham said to Laban,
48 'Blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham,
who had led me by the right way
to take the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son Isaac.
49 Now then, if you are going to show steadfast love
and faithfulness to my master, tell me;
and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left.'

50 Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said,
'The thing has come from the LORD;
we cannot speak to you bad or good.
51 Behold, Rebekah is before you; take her and go,
and let her be the wife of your master's son,
as the LORD has spoken.'

58 And they called Rebekah and said to her,
'Will you go with this man?'
She said, 'I will go.'
59 So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse,
and Abraham's servant and his men.
60 And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,
'Our sister, may you become
thousands of ten thousands,
and may your offspring possess
the gate of those who hate him!'

61 Then Rebekah and her young women arose
and rode on the camels and followed the man.
Thus the servant took Rebekah and went his way.

62 Now Isaac had returned from Beer-lahai-roi
and was dwelling in the Negeb.

63 And Isaac went out to meditate in the field towards evening.
And he lifted up his eyes and saw,
and behold, there were camels coming.
64 And Rebekah lifted up her eyes,
and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from the camel
65 and said to the servant,
'Who is that man, walking in the field to meet us?'
The servant said, 'It is my master.'
So she took her veil and covered herself.
66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.
67 Then Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother
and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her.
So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

The word of the Lord.

Tobit 7:6-14

'May the Lord of heaven lead you both on a good path, child,
and may he bring mercy and peace upon you both.'

A reading from the Book of Tobit.

In those days:

6 Raguel kissed Tobias and wept,

7 and he spoke and said to him,
'Blessing be upon you, child,
son of that good and noble father!
O most wretched of evils that a just man,
one who practised deeds of mercy,
was rendered blind.'
Then he fell upon the neck of his kinsman Tobias and wept.

8 And his wife Edna wept over him,
and their daughter Sarah likewise wept.

9 Then he killed a ram from the flock and welcomed them earnestly.

When they had bathed and washed themselves
and reclined at table to eat,
Tobias said to Raphael,
'Brother Azarias,
speak to Raguel, that he might give Sarah my sister to me.'

10 Raguel heard this and said to the youth,
'Eat, drink, and be merry this night,
for there is no person for whom it is proper to take Sarah
my daughter besides you, brother.
Likewise, I myself do not have authority
to give her to another man besides you,
for you are nearest kin to me.
But I will nevertheless explain the truth to you, child.

11 I gave her to seven husbands from among our brothers,
and they all died the night on which they were going in
to be with her.
But now, child, eat and drink, and the Lord will act among you.'
And Tobias said,

‘I will surely eat nothing here nor will I drink
until you settle the matters that concern me.’
So Raguel said to him, ‘I hereby do it,
and she is given to you according to the judgement
of the book of Moses.
It has been decided from heaven that she be given to you.
Receive your sister.
From now on you are her brother and she your sister.
She is given to you from today and for ever,
and may the Lord of heaven
lead you both on a good path this night, child,
and may he bring mercy and peace upon you both.’

12 Then Raguel called his daughter Sarah,
and she came to him, and taking her by the hand
he gave her to Tobias and said,
‘Receive your wife,
given to you according to the law
and according to the judgement written in the book of Moses.
Take her and go to your father safe and sound.
And may the God of heaven prosper your way in peace.’

13 And he called her mother,
and he told her to bring a scroll
and he wrote a marriage contract in the scroll,
to the effect that he gave her to him as a wife
according to the judgement of the law of Moses.
14 With that, they began to eat and drink.

The word of the Lord.

Tobit 8:4b-8

'We may grow old together.'

A reading from the Book of Tobit.

On their wedding night,
4 Tobias arose from the bed and said to Sarah,
'Sister, get up.
Let us pray and plead with our Lord
that he might bring us mercy and deliverance.'
5 So she arose and they began to pray
and plead that deliverance might come to them,
and he began to say:
'Blessed are you, O God of our fathers,
and blessed is your name through all the ages and generations.
Let the heavens and every creature bless you through the ages.
6 You made Adam, and you made his wife Eve for him
as a helper and support.
From them both the offspring of mankind came into being.
You said, "It is not good for the man to be alone;
let us make a helper for him like himself."
7 And now,
it is not because of lust that I am taking this sister of mine,
but with sincerity.
Grant that she and I may find mercy
and that we may grow old together.'
And they said together, 'Amen, Amen.'

The word of the Lord.

801-5a*

Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

'A woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.'

A reading from the Book of Proverbs.

10 An excellent wife who can find?
She is far more precious than jewels.
11 The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and he will have no lack of gain.
12 She does him good, and not harm,
all the days of her life.
13 She seeks wool and flax,
and works with willing hands.
19 She puts her hands to the distaff,
and her hands hold the spindle.
20 She opens her hand to the poor
and reaches out her hands to the needy.

30 Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.
31 Give her of the fruit of her hands,
and let her works praise her in the gates.

The word of the Lord.

Song of Solomon 2:8-10, 14, 16a; 8:6-7a

'Love is as strong as death.'

A reading from the Song of Solomon.

8 The voice of my beloved!
Behold, he comes,
leaping over the mountains,
bounding over the hills.
9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.
Behold, there he stands behind our wall,
gazing through the windows,
looking through the lattice.
10 My beloved speaks and says to me:
'Arise, my love, my beautiful one,
and come away.
14 O my dove, in the clefts of the rock,
in the crannies of the cliff,
let me see your face,
let me hear your voice,
for your voice is sweet,
and your face is lovely.'
16 My beloved is mine, and I am his.

8:6 Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm,
for love is strong as death,
jealousy is fierce as the grave.
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
the very flame of the LORD.
7 Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can floods drown it.

The word of the Lord.

Sirach 26:1-4, 13-16

'Like the sun rising, so is the beauty of a good wife in her well-ordered home.'

A reading from the Book of Sirach.

1 Happy is the husband of a good wife;
the number of his days will be doubled.
2 A courageous wife gladdens her husband,
and he will complete his years in peace.
3 A good wife is a great blessing;
she will be granted among the blessings of the man
who fears the Lord.
4 Whether rich or poor, his heart is glad,
and at all times his face is cheerful.

13 A wife's charm will delight her husband,
and her skill will put fat on his bones.
14 A silent wife is a gift of the Lord,
and there is nothing so precious as a disciplined soul.
15 A modest wife adds charm to charm,
and there is no fitting scale to weigh the value of a chaste soul.
16 Like the sun rising in the heights of the Lord,
so is the beauty of a good wife in her well-ordered home.

The word of the Lord.

Jeremiah 31:31-32a, 33-34a

'I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.'

A reading from the Prophet Jeremiah.

31 'Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD,
when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel
and the house of Judah,
32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers
on the day when I took them by the hand
to bring them out of the land of Egypt.

33 'For this is the covenant that I will make
with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD:
I will put my law within them,
and I will write it on their hearts.
And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbour
and each his brother,
saying, "Know the LORD", for they shall all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD.'

The word of the Lord.

802 Reading from the New Testament

802-1

Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39

'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?'

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters:

31 If God is for us, who can be against us?

32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all,
how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?
It is God who justifies.

34 Who is to condemn?
Christ Jesus is the one who died — more than that,
who was raised —
who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?
Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution,
or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors
through him who loved us.

38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers,
nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,

39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Longer form

802-2

Romans 12:1-2, 9-18

'Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.'

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

1 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God,
to present your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.
2 Do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,
that by testing you may discern what is the will of God,
what is good and acceptable and perfect.

9 Let love be genuine.
Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.
10 Love one another with brotherly affection.
Outdo one another in showing honour.
11 Do not be slothful in zeal,
be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.
12 Rejoice in hope,
be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.
13 Contribute to the needs of the saints
and seek to show hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you;
bless and do not curse them.
15 Rejoice with those who rejoice,
weep with those who weep.
16 Live in harmony with one another.
Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly.
17 Repay no one evil for evil,
but give thought to do what is honourable in the sight of all.
18 If possible, so far as it depends on you,
live peaceably with all.

The word of the Lord.

Shorter form

802-2

Romans 12:1-2, 9-13

'Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.'

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

1 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God,
to present your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.
2 Do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,
that by testing you may discern what is the will of God,
what is good and acceptable and perfect.

9 Let love be genuine.
Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.
10 Love one another with brotherly affection.
Outdo one another in showing honour.
11 Do not be slothful in zeal,
be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.
12 Rejoice in hope,
be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.
13 Contribute to the needs of the saints
and seek to show hospitality.

The word of the Lord.

Romans 15:1-3a, 5-7, 13

'Welcome one another as Christ.'

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters:

1 We who are strong have an obligation to bear with
the failings of the weak,
and not to please ourselves.
2 Let each of us please his neighbour for his good, to build him up.
3 For Christ did not please himself.

5 May the God of endurance and encouragement
grant you to live in such harmony with one another,
in accord with Christ Jesus,
6 that together you may with one voice
glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
7 Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you,
for the glory of God.
13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

The word of the Lord.

802-3

1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20

'Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.'

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.

Brothers and sisters:

13 The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord,
and the Lord for the body.

14 And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?

17 But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

18 Flee from sexual immorality.
Every other sin a person commits is outside the body,
but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

19 Or do you not know that your body
is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you,
whom you have from God?
You are not your own,

20 for you were bought with a price.
So glorify God in your body.

The word of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:8a

'If I have not love, I gain nothing.'

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.

Brothers and sisters:

31 Earnestly desire the higher gifts.
And I will show you a still more excellent way.

13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love,
I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

2 And if I have prophetic powers,
and understand all mysteries and all knowledge,
and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains,
but have not love, I am nothing.

3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned,
but have not love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient and kind;
love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude.
It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;
6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.
7 Love bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never ends.

The word of the Lord.

Ephesians 4:1-6

'One body and one Spirit.'

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians.

Brothers and sisters:

1 I, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk
in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,
2 with all humility and gentleness,
with patience, bearing with one another in love,
3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
4 There is one body and one Spirit —
just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call —
5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
6 one God and Father of all,
who is over all and through all and in all.

The word of the Lord.

Longer form

802-5*

Ephesians 5:2a. 21-33

'This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church.'

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians.

Brothers and sisters:

2 Walk in love,
as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.
22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.
23 For the husband is the head of the wife
even as Christ is the head of the Church, his body,
and is himself its Saviour.
24 Now as the Church submits to Christ,
so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

25 Husbands, love your wives,
as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her,
26 that he might sanctify her,
having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,
27 so that he might present the Church to himself in splendour,
without spot or wrinkle or any such thing,
that she might be holy and without blemish.
28 In the same way husbands should love their wives
as their own bodies.
He who loves his wife loves himself.
29 For no one ever hated his own flesh,
but nourishes and cherishes it,
just as Christ does the Church,
30 because we are members of his body.
31 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother
and hold fast to his wife,
and the two shall become one flesh.'
32 This mystery is profound,
and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church.
33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself,
and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

The word of the Lord.

Shorter form

802-5*

Ephesians 5:2a. 25-32

'This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church.'

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians.

Brothers and sisters:

2 Walk in love,
as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.

25 Husbands, love your wives,
as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her,
26 that he might sanctify her,
having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,
27 so that he might present the Church to himself in splendour,
without spot or wrinkle or any such thing,
that she might be holy and without blemish.
28 In the same way husbands should love their wives
as their own bodies.
He who loves his wife loves himself.
29 For no one ever hated his own flesh,
but nourishes and cherishes it,
just as Christ does the Church,
30 because we are members of his body.
31 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother
and hold fast to his wife,
and the two shall become one flesh.'
32 This mystery is profound,
and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church.

The word of the Lord.

Philippians 4:4-9

'The God of peace will be with you.'

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians.

Brothers and sisters:
4 Rejoice in the Lord always;
again I will say, rejoice.
5 Let your reasonableness be known to everyone.
The Lord is at hand;
6 do not be anxious about anything,
but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving
let your requests be made known to God.
7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
8 Finally, brothers and sisters,
whatever is true, whatever is honourable,
whatever is just, whatever is pure,
whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable,
if there is any excellence,
if there is anything worthy of praise:
think about these things.
9 What you have learned and received
and heard and seen in me —
practice these things,
and the God of peace will be with you.

The word of the Lord.

Colossians 3:12-17

'Above all put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.'

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians.

Brothers and sisters:

12 Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved,
compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,
13 bearing with one another
and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other;
as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.
14 And above all these put on love,
which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,
to which indeed you were called in one body.
And be thankful.
16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,
teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom,
singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
17 And whatever you do, in word or deed,
do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The word of the Lord.

Hebrews 13:1-4a, 5-6b

'Let marriage be held in honour among all.'

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews.

Brothers and sisters:

1 Let brotherly love continue.
2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers,
for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.
3 Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them,
and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.
4 Let marriage be held in honour among all
and let the marriage bed be undefiled.
5 Keep your life free from love of money,
and be content with what you have,
for he has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'
6 So we can confidently say,
'The Lord is my helper;
I will not fear.'

The word of the Lord.

802-7*

1 Peter 3:1-9

'All of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love.'

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Peter.

Beloved:

1 Wives, be subject to your own husbands,
so that even if some do not obey the word,
they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives,
2 when they see your respectful and pure conduct.
3 Do not let your adorning be external —
the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewellery,
or the clothing you wear —
4 but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart
with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit,
which in God's sight is very precious.
5 For this is how the holy women who hoped in God
used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands,
6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.
And you are her children,
if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

7 Likewise, husbands,
live with your wives in an understanding way,
showing honour to the woman as the weaker vessel,
since they are heirs of the grace of life,
so that your prayers may not be hindered.

8 Finally, all of you,
have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love,
a tender heart, and a humble mind.
9 Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling,
but on the contrary, bless,
for to this you were called,
that you may obtain a blessing.

The word of the Lord.

1 John 3:18-24

'Let us love in deed and in truth.'

A reading from the First Letter of Saint John.

18 Little children,
let us not love in word or talk, but in deed and in truth.
19 By this we shall know that we are of the truth
and reassure our heart before him;
20 for whenever our heart condemns us,
God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.
21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us,
we have confidence before God;
22 and whatever we ask we receive from him,
because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.
23 And this is his commandment,
that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ
and love one another, just as he has commanded us.
24 Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God,
and God in him.
And by this we know that he abides in us,
by the Spirit whom he has given us.

The word of the Lord.

1 John 4:7-12

'God is love.'

A reading from the First Letter of Saint John.

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God,
and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.
8 Anyone who does not love does not know God,
because God is love.
9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us,
that God sent his only Son into the world,
so that we might live through him.
10 In this is love,
not that we have loved God but that he loved us
and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
11 Beloved, if God so loved us,
we also ought to love one another.
12 No one has ever seen God;
if we love one another,
God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

The word of the Lord.

Revelation 19:1, 5-9a

'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'

A reading from the Book of Revelation.

1 I, John, heard what seemed to be the loud voice
of a great multitude in heaven, crying out,
'Alleluia!
Salvation and glory and power belong to our God.'

5 And from the throne came a voice saying,
'Praise our God,
all you his servants,
you who fear him,
small and great.'

6 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude,
like the roar of many waters
and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,
'Alleluia!
For the Lord our God
the Almighty reigns.

7 Let us rejoice and exult
and give him the glory,
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his Bride has made herself ready;

8 it was granted her to clothe herself
with fine linen, bright and pure' —
for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

9 And the angel said to me, 'Write this:
Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper
of the Lamb.'

The word of the Lord.

803 Responsorial Psalm

803-1

Psalm 33(32):12, 18. 20-21. 22. ℟.5b

℟. The merciful love of the Lord fills the earth.

12 Blessed the nation whose God is the Lord,
the people he has chosen as his heritage.
18 Yes, the Lord's eyes are on those who fear him,
who hope in his merciful love. ℟.

20 Our soul is waiting for the Lord.
He is our help and our shield.
21 In him do our hearts find joy.
We trust in his holy name. ℟.

22 May your merciful love be upon us,
as we hope in you, O Lord. ℟.

℟. I will bless the Lord at all times.

or: Taste and see that the Lord is good.

2 I will bless the Lord at all times,
praise of him is always in my mouth.
3 In the Lord my soul shall make its boast;
the humble shall hear and be glad. ℟.

4 Glorify the Lord with me;
together let us praise his name.
5 I sought the Lord, and he answered me;
from all my terrors he set me free. ℟.

6 Look towards him and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.
7 This lowly one called; the Lord heard,
and rescued him from all his distress. ℟.

8 The angel of the Lord is encamped
around those who fear him, to rescue them.
9 Taste and see that the Lord is good.
Blessed the man who seeks refuge in him. ℟.

℟. The Lord is compassionate and gracious.

or: The mercy of the Lord is everlasting
upon those who hold him in fear.

1 Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all within me, his holy name.
2 Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and never forget all his benefits. ℟.

8 The Lord is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger and rich in mercy.
13 As a father has compassion on his children,
the Lord's compassion is on those who fear him. ℟.

17 But the mercy of the Lord is everlasting
upon those who hold him in fear,
upon children's children his justice,
18 for those who keep his covenant. ℟.

℟. Blessed the man who takes great delight
in the commandments of the Lord.

or: Alleluia. (outside Lent)

1 Blessed the man who fears the Lord,
who takes great delight in his commandments.
2 His descendants shall be powerful on earth;
the generation of the upright will be blest. ℟.

3 Riches and wealth are in his house;
his justice stands firm for ever.
4 A light rises in the darkness for the upright;
he is generous, merciful and just. ℟.

5 It goes well for the man who deals generously and lends,
who conducts his affairs with justice.
6 He will never be moved;
for ever shall the upright be remembered. ℟.

7 He has no fear of evil news;
with a firm heart, he trusts in the Lord.
8 With a steadfast heart he will not fear;
he will see the downfall of his foes. ℟.

9 Open-handed, he gives to the poor;
his justice stands firm for ever.
His might shall be exalted in glory. ℟.

Psalm 128(127):1-2. 3. 4-5ac, 6. ℟.1a or 4

℟. Blessed are all who fear the Lord.

or: Indeed thus shall be blessed the husband who fears the Lord.

1 Blessed are all who fear the Lord,
and walk in his ways!
2 By the labour of your hands you shall eat.
You will be blessed and prosper. ℟.

3 Your wife like a fruitful vine
in the heart of your house;
your children like shoots of the olive
around your table. ℟.

4 Indeed thus shall be blessed
the husband who fears the Lord.
5 May the Lord bless you from Sion
all the days of your life!
6 May you see your children's children. ℟.

℟. How good is the Lord to all.

8 The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in mercy.
9 How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures. ℟.

10 All your works shall thank you, O Lord,
and all your faithful ones bless you.
15 The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food in due season. ℟.

17 The Lord is just in all his ways,
and holy in all his deeds.
18 The Lord is close to all who call him,
who call on him in truth. ℟.

℟. Praise the name of the Lord.

or: Alleluia. (outside Lent)

1 Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights.
2 Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his hosts. ℟.

3 Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all shining stars.
4 Praise him, highest heavens,
and the waters above the heavens. ℟.

9 Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars,
10 beasts, both wild and tame,
creeping things and birds on the wing. ℟.

11 Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all judges of the earth,
12 young men and maidens as well,
the old and the young together.
13 Let them praise the name of the Lord. ℟.

For his name alone is exalted,
his splendour above heaven and earth.
14 He exalts the strength of his people. ℟.

804 Acclamation before the Gospel

Outside of Lent, the response to the verse before the Gospel is Alleluia.

During Lent, one of the following acclamations is used instead of Alleluia as a response to the verse before the Gospel:

a. Glory and praise to you, O Christ.
b. Glory to you, O Christ, Wisdom of God the Father.
c. Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God.
d. Glory to you, O Christ, Son of the living God.
e. Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus.
f. Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.
g. Great and wonderful are your works, O Lord.
h. Salvation, glory, and power belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.

804-1 1 John 4:7b

Whoever loves has been born of God
and knows God.

804-2 1 John 4:8b, 11

God is love;
if God so loved us, we ought to love one another.

804-3 1 John 4:12

If we love one another, God abides in us
and his love is perfected in us.

804-4 1 John 4:16

Whoever abides in love abides in God,
and God abides in him.

805 Gospel

805-1

Matthew 5:1-12a

'Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.'

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

At that time:

1 Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up on the mountain,
and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.
2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:
3 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
5 Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.
7 Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.
8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
11 Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you
and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Matthew 5:13-16

'You are the light of the world.'

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples,

13 'You are the salt of the earth,
but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?
It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out
and trampled under people's feet.

14 'You are the light of the world.
A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.
15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket,
but on a stand,
and it gives light to all in the house.
16 In the same way, let your light shine before others,
so that they may see your good works
and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Longer form

805-3

Matthew 7:21, 24-29

'He built his house on the rock.'

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples,

21 'Not everyone who says to me,
"Lord, Lord", will enter the kingdom of heaven,
but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

24 'Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them
will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.
25 And the rain fell, and the floods came,
and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall,
because it had been founded on the rock.
26 And everyone who hears these words of mine
and does not do them
will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.
27 And the rain fell, and the floods came,
and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell,
and great was the fall of it.'

28 And when Jesus finished these sayings,
the crowds were astonished at his teaching,
29 for he was teaching them as one who had authority,
and not as their scribes.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Shorter form

805-3

Matthew 7:21, 24-25

'He built his house on the rock.'

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples,

21 'Not everyone who says to me,
"Lord, Lord", will enter the kingdom of heaven,
but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

24 'Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them
will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.
25 And the rain fell, and the floods came,
and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall,
because it had been founded on the rock.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Matthew 19:3-6

'What therefore God has joined together, let no one separate.'

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

At that time:

3 Pharisees came up to Jesus and tested him by asking,
'Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?'

4 He answered,
'Have you not read that he who created them
from the beginning made them male and female,

5 and said, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother
and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh"?

6 So they are no longer two but one flesh.
What therefore God has joined together,
let no one separate.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Matthew 22:35-40

'This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it.'

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

At that time:

35 One of the Pharisees, a lawyer, asked Jesus a question to test him.

36 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?'

37 And he said to him,
'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your mind.

38 This is the great and first commandment.

39 And a second is like it:
You shall love your neighbour as yourself.

40 On these two commandments depend all the Law
and the Prophets.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Mark 10:6-9
'They are no longer two but one flesh.'

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

At that time: Jesus said,
6 'From the beginning of creation,
"God made them male and female."
7 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother
and hold fast to his wife,
8 and the two shall become one flesh."
So they are no longer two but one flesh.
9 What therefore God has joined together,
let no one separate.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

John 2:1-11

'This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee.'

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

At that time:

1 There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee,
and the mother of Jesus was there.
2 Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples.
3 When the wine ran out,
the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.'
4 And Jesus said to her,
'Woman, what does this have to do with me?
My hour has not yet come.'
5 His mother said to the servants,
'Do whatever he tells you.'

6 Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites
of purification,
each holding seventy or one hundred litres.
7 Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water.'
And they filled them up to the brim.
8 And he said to them,
'Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.'
So they took it.
9 When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine,
and did not know where it came from
(though the servants who had drawn the water knew),
the master of the feast called the bridegroom
10 and said to him,
'Everyone serves the good wine first,
and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine.
But you have kept the good wine until now.'

11 This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee,
and manifested his glory.
And his disciples believed in him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

John 15:9-12
'Abide in my love.'

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples,

9 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.
Abide in my love.

10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love,
just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

11 These things I have spoken to you,
that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

12 'This is my commandment,
that you love one another as I have loved you.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

John 15:12-16

'This is my commandment, that you love one another.'

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples,

12 'This is my commandment,
that you love one another as I have loved you.
13 Greater love has no one than this,
that someone lay down his life for his friends.
14 You are my friends if you do what I command you.
15 No longer do I call you servants,
for the servant does not know what his master is doing;
but I have called you friends,
for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

16 'You did not choose me, but I chose you
and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit
and that your fruit should abide,
so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Longer form

805-10

John 17:20-26

'May they become perfectly one.'

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

At that time: Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, and praying said,
'Holy Father,
20 I do not ask for these only,
but also for those who will believe in me through their word,
21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me,
and I in you,
that they also may be in us,
so that the world may believe that you have sent me.
22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them,
that they may be one even as we are one,
23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one,
so that the world may know that you sent me
and loved them even as you loved me.
24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me,
may be with me where I am,
to see my glory that you have given me
because you loved me before the foundation of the world.
25 O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you,
I know you, and these know that you have sent me.
26 I made known to them your name,
and I will continue to make it known,
that the love with which you have loved me may be in them,
and I in them.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Shorter form

805-10

John 17:20-23

'May they become perfectly one.'

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

At that time: Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, and praying said,
'Holy Father,
20 I do not ask for these only,
but also for those who will believe in me through their word,
21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me,
and I in you,
that they also may be in us,
so that the world may believe that you have sent me.
22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them,
that they may be one even as we are one,
23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one,
so that the world may know that you sent me
and loved them even as you loved me.'

The Gospel of the Lord.