APPENDIX A: SAMPLE PRAYERS & BLESSINGS

T he following prayers and blessings are provided both as supplements for those prayers and blessings provided in the Rites book and as models for how a Presider might personalize the Rite of Marriage through the use of the presidential prayers and the nuptial blessing.

• OPENING PRAYERS

T oving God,
Lyou make the vocation of marriage a holy
mystery, a symbol of Christ's love for the Church.
Hear our prayers for and
With faith in you and in one another,
they pledge their love today.
May their lives always bear witness to that love.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever.

Assembly: Amen.

This prayer – or rather this model of a prayer – is especially useful in a wedding between Catholics. It stresses both the vocation of marriage and the relationship between the love of the couple and Christ's love for the Church. It can be varied in a number of ways, depending on the couple; for example, it may be altered for mixed marriages, or to emphasize the couple's sense that the Spirit has called them together.

T oving God,
Lyou make marriage a holy mystery, a symbol of
the love with which you encircle your people.
Hear our prayers for and
With faith in you and in one another,
they pledge their love today.
May their lives affirm this pledge, and reveal the
Spirit by which you have united them.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever.

Assembly: Amen.

Other versions of the opening prayer also work well in mixed marriages, for example the following prayer is appropriate for two Christians, especially when their union is built on a special sense of joy and the community with whom they celebrate is particularly valued by them.

Faithful God,
hear our prayers for _____ and ____.
With joy and hope, they come before us, to pledge
their love and their lives to one another.
May they always be faithful to this pledge
and know the joy of the commitment,
by which you consecrate their love with your grace.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever.

Assembly: Amen.

This prayer may also be used, with variations, in situations where a Catholic marries a non-Christian, and, as in the following example, where the community has been a challenge.

Faithful God, hear our prayers for _____ and ____. With faith in one another and in you, they call this community together to pledge their love and their lives to one another. May they always be faithful to this pledge and know the joy of the rite, by which you consecrate their love with your grace. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

Assembly: Amen.

• AN ALTERNATIVE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Though in a Nuptial Mass, the Presider may choose from a number of Eucharistic prayers, this recommended alternative comes from the recently approved additional prayers, with an insertion drawn from the marriage form of Eucharistic Prayer I.

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER: JESUS — WAY TO THE FATHER

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation always and everywhere to give you thanks, God of holiness, Lord of heaven and earth, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through your eternal Word you created all things and govern their course with infinite wisdom In the Word may flesh you have given us a mediator who has spoken your word to us and called us to follow him.

He is the way that leads to you, the truth that sets us free, the life that makes our joy complete. This outpouring of love in the new covenant of grace is symbolized in the marriage covenant that seals the love of husband and wife with the power of the Holy Spirit.

And so we praise your goodness and join with the hosts of angels, as they proclaim your glory without end:

Assembly: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

You are truly blessed, O God of holiness: you accompany us with love as we journey through life.
Blessed too is your Son, Jesus Christ, who is present among us and whose love gathers us together.
As once he did for his disciples, Christ now opens the scriptures for us and breaks the bread.

Great and merciful God, we ask you to send down your Holy Spirit to hallow these gifts of bread and wine, that they may become for us the body

and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

On the eve of his passion and death, while at table with those he loved, he took bread and gave you thanks; he broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Take this, all of you, and eat it: this is my body, which will be give up for you."

When supper was ended he took the cup; again he gave you thanks, and, handing the cup to his disciples, he said:

"Take this, all of you, and drink from it: this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me."

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

And so, God most holy, we celebrate the memory of Christ, your Son, whom you led through suffering and death on the cross to the glory of the resurrection and a place at your right hand.

Until Jesus, our Savior, comes again, we proclaim the work of your love, and we offer you the bread of life and the cup of eternal blessing.

Look with favor on the offering of your Church in which we show forth the paschal sacrifice of Christ entrusted to us. Through the power of your Spirit of love include us now and forever among the members of your Son, whose body and blood we share.

Almighty God,
receive the commitment of _____ and ____,
married this day.

By their sharing in this mystery enliven them
with your Spirit and conform them,
and all of us, to the image of your Son.

Strengthen the bonds of our communion
with John Paul, our pope,
_____, our bishop, with all the bishops,
and all your holy people.

Keep your Church alert in faith to the signs of the times and eager to accept the challenge of the gospel. Open our hearts to the needs of all humanity, so that sharing their grief and anguish, their joy and hope, we may faithfully bring them the good news of salvation and advance together on the way to your kingdom.

Be mindful of our brothers and sisters who have fallen asleep in the peace of Christ, and all the dead whose faith only you can know. Lead them to the fullness of the resurrection and gladden them with the light of your face.

When our pilgrimage on earth is complete, welcome us into your heavenly home, where we shall dwell with you for ever.

There, with Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, with the apostles, the martyrs, and all the saints, we shall praise you and give you glory through Jesus Christ, your Son.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty Father, forever and ever.

Assembly: Amen.

◆ AN ALTERNATIVE NUPTIAL BLESSING

I constantly tinker with this blessing, changing words and images depending on the couple and the readings they chose (I try to weave references to the readings into the blessing). The italicized words, in particular, may be changed to refer to the readings. This blessing can also be varied to stress certain aspects that the couple themselves find important in their relationship, e.g. friendship, family, faith, etc. It is not these details but the basic structure and movement that makes this blessing successful.

My dear friends, before we leave this holy and
happy ceremony, we take a moment to call down
the Spirit of God upon and
This solemn nuptial blessing allows us to give to this
couple our greatest gift – our prayers of support and
hope. And so, as I pray aloud, I invite you to pray
along in your heart, and to think what blessing you
wish to give to this couple on this holy day.

With hand extended over the couple, who bow their heads:

God, our life and our hope, in your love you fashioned us from the earth, and breathed into us your Spirit. You made us male and female, to praise you in our diversity, and imitate you in our union.

By your design, married life has been created, that through the constancy of human love the earth might be renewed and the blessings of new life spread to all the world.

Look graciously upon your daughter, _____, and, your son, _____, whom you have united in marriage.

May they live passionately together, loving each other with all the joy and energy of body, mind, and spirit.

May they always trust each other, respect each other, hope in each other; may they find in one another a lifelong friend, a partner to offer support in times of trouble, and celebration in times of joy.

Eternal God,

keep _____ and ____ faithful to the
sacrament of love into which they have entered.

May your word find a home within them,
and through them, become a blessing
for all of those they know.

God of life, bless _____ and ____ with children, and help them to be good parents, passing on the gifts they have received and nurturing their children with strength and love.

May they grow old together, and see their children's children gathered around them in joy until they come to the fullness of life in you.

All this we ask through Christ our Lord.

Assembly: Amen.