

The Wedding Service

The Service of Betrothal

The betrothal is celebrated in the narthex, or in the back part of the church.

P: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Pp: Amen.

D: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: For the peace from above and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy churches of God, and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: For this holy house and for those who enter with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: For His Beatitude, our Metropolitan ____, and for His (Eminence, Grace), our (Archbishop, Bishop) for the honorable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: For the servant of God ____, and for the handmaiden of God ____ who now plight each other their troth, and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: That they may be granted children for the continuation of the race, and all their petitions which are unto salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: That He will send down upon them perfect and peaceful love, and assistance, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: That He will preserve them in oneness of mind, and in steadfast faith, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: That He will preserve them in a blameless way of life, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: That the Lord our God will grant to them an honorable marriage and a bed undefiled, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

Pp: To Thee, O Lord.

P: For Unto Thee are due all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Pp: Amen.

P: O eternal God, who hast brought into unity those who were sundered, and hast ordained for them an indissoluble bond of love, who didst bless Isaac and Rebecca, and didst make them heirs of Thy promise: Bless also these Thy servants, and guiding them unto every good work.

For Thou art a good God and lovest mankind, and unto Thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Pp: Amen.

P: Peace be unto all.

Pp: And to your spirit.

D: Bow your heads unto the Lord.

Pp: To Thee, O Lord.

P: O Lord our God, who hast espoused the Church as a pure virgin from among the gentiles: Bless this betrothal, and unite and maintain these Thy servants in peace and oneness of mind.

For unto Thee are due all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Pp: Amen.

Then taking the rings, the priest blesses the bridal pair, making the sign of the cross with the ring of the bride over the bridegroom, and with that of the bridegroom over the bride, saying to the man:

P: The servant of God, ____, is betrothed to the handmaiden of God, ____, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

And to the woman.

P: The handmaiden of God, ____, is betrothed to the servant of God, ____, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

And when he has said this to each of them three times, he places the rings on their right hands. Then the bridal pair exchanges the rings, and the priest says the following prayer:

D: Let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

P: O Lord our God, who didst accompany the servant of the patriarch Abraham into Mesopotamia, when he was sent to espouse a wife for his lord Isaac, and who, by means of the drawing of water, didst reveal to him that he should betroth Rebecca: Do Thou, the same Lord, bless also the betrothal of these Thy servants, ____ and ____, and confirm the promise that they have made. Establish them in the holy union which is from Thee. For in the beginning Thou didst make them male and female, and by Thee the woman is joined unto the man as a helper and for the procreation of the human race. Therefore, O Lord our God, who hast sent forth Thy truth upon Thine inheritance, and Thy covenant unto Thy servants our fathers, Thine elect from generation to generation: Look upon Thy servant, ____, and Thy handmaiden, ____, and establish and make firm their betrothal, in faith and in oneness of mind, in truth and in love. For Thou, O Lord, hast declared that a pledge should be given and confirmed in all things. By a ring power was given to Joseph in Egypt; by a ring Daniel was glorified in the land of Babylon; by a ring the uprightness of Tamar was revealed; by a ring our heavenly Father showed His bounty upon His Son, for He said: Bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry. By Thine own right hand, O Lord, Thou didst arm Moses in the Red Sea; by Thy true word the heavens were established, and the foundations of the earth were made firm; and the right hands of Thy servants also shall be blessed by Thy mighty word and by Thine upraised arm. Therefore, O Master, bless now this putting-on of rings with Thy heavenly blessing, and let Thine angel go before them all the days of their life.

For Thou art He that blesses and sanctifies all things, and unto Thee are due all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Pp: Amen.

The Service of Crowning

The bridal couple, preceded by the Priest, moves in procession to the center of the church.

Priest and People:

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways!

You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you.

Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house;

Your children will be like olive shoots around your table.

Lo, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord.

The Lord bless you from Zion!

May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life!

May you see your children's children! Peace be upon Israel! (Psalm 128)

An exhortation may follow. Then, according to Slavonic editions of the marriage service, the priest shall inquire of bridegroom:

P: Do you, ____, have a good, free and unconstrained will and a firm intention to take as your wife this woman, ____, whom you see here before you?

Bridegroom: I have, reverend father.

P: Have you promised yourself to any other bride?

Bridegroom: I have not promised myself, reverend father.

And the priest, looking at the bride, shall ask her.

Do you, ____, have a good, free and unconstrained will and a firm intention to take as your husband this man, whom you see here before you?

Bride: I have, reverend father.

P: Have you promised yourself to any other man?

Bride: I have not promised myself, reverend father.

P: Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Pp: Amen.

D: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: For the peace from above and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy churches of God, and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: For this holy house and for those who enter with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: For His Beatitude, our Metropolitan and for His (Eminence, Grace), our (Archbishop, Bishop), for the honorable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: For the servants of God, ___ and ___, who are now being united to each other in the community of marriage, and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: That He will bless this marriage, as He blessed the marriage in Cana of Galilee, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: That He will grant to them chastity, and of the fruit of the womb as is expedient for them, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: That He will make them glad with the sight of sons and daughters, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: That He will grant to them enjoyment of the blessing of children, and a blameless life, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: That He will grant to them and to us, all our petitions which are unto salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: That He will deliver them and us from all affliction, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

Pp: To Thee, O Lord.

P: For unto Thee are due all glory, honor, and worship. to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Pp: Amen.

D: Let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

Then the priest recites aloud the following prayer:

P: O God most pure, fashioner of every creature, who didst transform the rib of our fore father Adam into a wife, because of Thy love towards mankind, and didst bless them and say to them: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, who didst make of the two one flesh: Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh, and what God has joined together, let no man put asunder: Thou didst bless Thy servant Abraham, and opening the womb of Sarah didst make him to be the father of many nations. Thou didst give Isaac to Rebecca: and didst bless her in childbearing. Thou didst join Jacob unto Rachel, and from them didst bring forth the twelve patriarchs. Thou didst unite Joseph and Aseneth, giving to them Ephraim and Manasseh as the fruit of their procreation. Thou didst accept Zechariah and Elizabeth, and didst make their offspring to be the Forerunner. From the root of Jesse according to the flesh, Thou didst bud forth the Ever-virgin one, and wast incarnate of her, and wast born of her for the redemption of the human race. Through Thine unutterable gift and manifold goodness, Thou didst come to Cana of Galilee, and didst bless the marriage there, to make manifest that it is Thy will that there should be lawful marriage and procreation. Do Thou, the same all-holy Master, accept the prayers of us Thy servants. As Thou wast present there, be also present here with Thine invisible protection. Bless this marriage, and grant to these Thy servants, ___ and ___, a peaceful life, length of days, chastity, mutual love in the bond of peace, long-lived offspring, gratitude from their children. a crown of glory that does not fade away. Graciously grant that they may see their children's children. Preserve their bed unassailed, and give them of the dew of heaven from on high, and of the fatness of the earth. Fill their houses with wheat, wine and oil and with every good thing, so that they may give

in turn to those in need; and grant also to those here present with them all their petitions which are for their salvation.

For Thou art the God of mercies, and of bounties, and of love towards mankind, and unto Thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Pp: Amen.

D: Let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

Then the priest recites aloud the following prayer:

P: Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, priest of mystical and undefiled marriage, and ordainer of the law of the marriage of the body; preserver of immortality, and provider of the good things of life; the same master who in the beginning didst make man and establish him as a king over creation, and didst say: "It is not good that man should be alone up on the earth. Let us make a helper fit for him." Taking one of his ribs, Thou didst fashion woman; and when Adam saw her he said: "This is at last bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh; what therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder: Do Thou now also, O Master, our Lord and our God, send down Thy heavenly grace upon these Thy servants, and grant that this Thy handmaiden may be subject to her husband in all things, and that this Thy servant may be the head of his wife, so that they may live according to Thy will.

Bless them, O Lord our God, as Thou didst bless Abraham and Sarah. Bless them, O Lord our God, as Thou didst bless Isaac and Rebecca. Bless them, O Lord our God, as Thou didst bless Jacob and all the patriarchs. Bless them, O Lord our God, as Thou didst bless Joseph and Aseneth. Bless them, O Lord our God, as Thou didst bless Moses and Zipporah. Bless them, O Lord our God, as Thou didst bless Joachim and Anna. Bless them, O Lord our God, as Thou didst bless Zechariah and Elizabeth.

Preserve them, O Lord our God, as Thou didst preserve Noah in the ark. Preserve them, O Lord our God, as Thou didst preserve Jonah in the belly of the whale. Preserve them, O Lord our God, as Thou didst preserve the three holy children from the fire, sending down upon them dew from heaven; and let that gladness come upon them which the blessed Helen had when she found the precious cross.

Remember them, O Lord our God, as Thou didst remember Enoch, Shem, Elijah. Remember them, O Lord our God, as Thou didst remember Thy forty holy martyrs, sending down upon them crowns from heaven. Remember them, O Lord our God, and the parents who have nurtured them, for the prayers of parents make firm the foundations of houses. Remember, O Lord our God, Thy servants, the groomsmen and the bridesmaids of the bridal pair, who have come together in this joy.

Remember, O Lord our God, Thy servant, ____, and Thy handmaiden, ____, and bless them. Grant them of the fruit of their bodies, fair children, concord of soul and body. Exalt them like the cedars of Lebanon, like a luxuriant vine. Give them offspring in number like unto full ears of grain; so that, having enough of all things, they may abound in every work that is good and acceptable unto Thee. Let them see their children's children, like olive shoots around their table; so that, finding favor in Thy sight, they may shine like the stars of heaven, in Thee our God. For unto Thee are due an glory, honor, and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Pp: Amen.

D: Let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

And again the priest prays aloud.

P: O holy God, who didst form man from the dust, and didst fashion woman from his rib, and didst join her unto him as a helper, for it seemed good to Thy majesty that man should not be alone upon the earth: Do Thou, the same Lord, stretch out now also Thy hand from Thy holy dwelling-place, and unite this Thy servant, ____, and this Thy handmaiden, ____; for by Thee is the husband joined unto the wife. Unite them in one mind; wed them into one flesh, granting to them the fruit of the body and the procreation of fair children.

For Thine is the Majesty, and Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Pp: Amen.

The priest takes the crowns, which recall those with which the "martyrs," or witnesses of Christ, are crowned in heaven, and crowns first the bridegroom, saying:

P: The servant of God, ____, is crowned unto the handmaiden of God, ____, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

So also he crowns the bride, saying:

P: The handmaiden of God, ____, is crowned unto the servant of God, ____, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Then he blesses them three times, saying each time:

P: O Lord our God, crown them with glory and honor.

D: Let us attend.

P: peace be unto all.

R: And to your spirit.

D: Wisdom!

R: The Prokeimenon in the eighth tone. (Psalm 21):
Thou hast set upon their heads crowns of precious stones; they asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest it them.

V: Yea, Thou wilt make them most blessed for ever; Thou wilt make them glad with the joy of Thy presence.

D: Wisdom!

R: The reading from the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Ephesians (5:20-33):

D: Let us attend.

R: Brethren: Give thanks always and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father. Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For, the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, His body, and is Himself its Savior. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that the church might be presented before Him in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, because we are members of His body. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one." This is a great mystery, and I take it to mean Christ and the church; however, let each one of you love his wife as himself and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

P: Peace be unto you, Reader.

R: And to your spirit. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Pp: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

V: (Ps. 12 Tone 5): Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us and preserve us from this generation forever.

P: Peace be unto all.

Pp: And to your spirit.

P: The reading from the Holy Gospel according to Saint John. (2:1-11)

Pp: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.

D: Let us attend.

P: In those days there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; Jesus also was invited to the marriage, with His disciples. When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever He tells you." Now six stone jars were standing there, for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or

thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast." So they took it. When the steward 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 steward of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine until now." This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

Pp: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.

D: Let us all say with all our soul and with all our mind, let us say.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: O Lord almighty, the God of our Fathers, we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Thy great goodness, we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.

Pp: Lord, have mercy. (3)

D: Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, and visitation for the servants of God, and (and he mentions also whomever else he wishes), and for the pardon and remission of their sins.

Pp: Lord, have mercy. (3)

P: For Thou art a merciful God, and lovest mankind, and unto Thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Pp: Amen.

D: Let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

P: O Lord our God, who in Thy saving dispensation didst vouchsafe by Thy presence in Cana of Galilee to declare marriage honorable: Do Thou, the same Lord, now also maintain in peace and concord Thy servants, ___ and ___, whom Thou hast been pleased to join together. Cause their marriage to be honorable. Preserve their bed blameless. Mercifully grant that they may live together in purity; and enable them to reach a ripe old age, walking in Thy commandments with a pure heart.

For Thou art our God, the God of mercy and salvation, and unto Thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Pp: Amen.

D: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

D: That the whole day may be perfect, holy, peaceful, and sinless, let us ask of the Lord.

Pp: Grant it, O Lord.

D: An angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies, let us ask of the Lord.

Pp: Grant it, O Lord.

D: Pardon and remission of our sins and transgressions, let us ask of the Lord.

Pp: Grant it, O Lord.

D: All things that are good and profitable for our souls, and peace for the world, let us ask of the Lord.

Pp: Grant it, O Lord.

D: That we may complete the remaining time of our life in peace and repentance, let us ask of the Lord.

Pp: Grant it, O Lord.

D: A Christian ending to our life, painless, blameless, and peaceful; and a good defense before the dread judgment seat of Christ, let us ask of the Lord,

Pp: Grant it, O Lord.

D: Having asked for the unity of the Faith, and communion of the Holy Spirit, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

Pp: To Thee, O Lord.

P: And make us worthy, O Master, that with boldness and without condemnation we may dare to call on Thee, the heavenly God, as Father, and to say:

Pp: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

P: For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Pp: Amen.

P: Peace be unto all.

Pp. And to your spirit.

D: Bow your heads unto the Lord.

Pp: To Thee, O Lord.

Then the common cup is brought and the priest blesses it.

D: Let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

P: O God, who hast created all things by Thy might, and hast made firm the world, and adornest the crown of all that Thou hast made: Bless now, with Thy spiritual blessing, this common cup, which Thou dost give to those who are now united for the community of marriage.

For blessed is Thy name, and glorified is Thy Kingdom, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Pp: Amen.

Then, taking the cup, the priest gives it to them three times; first to the bridegroom and then to the bride. Then immediately the priest takes them, the groomsmen behind them holding their crowns, and leads them in a circle three times around the lectern. And the priest or the People sings.

Rejoice, O Isaiah! A virgin is with child; and shall bear a Son, Emmanuel: He is both God and man; and Orient is His name; magnifying Him, we call the virgin blessed.

O holy martyrs, who fought the good fight and have received your crowns: Entreat ye the Lord, that He will have mercy on our souls.

Glory to Thee, O Christ God, the apostles' boast, the martyrs' joy, whose preaching was the consubstantial Trinity.

Then, taking the crown of the bridegroom, the priest says.

P: Be exalted like Abraham, O Bridegroom, and be blessed like Isaac, and multiply like Jacob, walking in peace, and keeping God's commandments in righteousness.

Then, taking the crown of the bride, he says.

P: And you, O Bride: Be exalted like Sarah, and exult like Rebecca, and multiply like Rachel; and rejoice in your husband, fulfilling the conditions of the law, for this is well pleasing to God.

D: Let us pray to the Lord.

Pp: Lord, have mercy.

P: O God, our God, who didst come to Cana of Galilee, and didst bless there the marriage feast: Bless also these Thy servants, who through Thy good providence now are united in wedlock. Bless their goings out and their comings in. Fill their life with good things. Receive their crowns into Thy Kingdom, preserving them spotless, blameless, and without reproach, unto ages of ages.

Pp: Amen.

P: Peace be unto all.

Pp: And to your spirit.

D: Bow your heads unto the Lord.

Pp: To Thee, O Lord.

P: May the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the all-holy, consubstantial, and life giving Trinity, one Godhead and one Kingdom, bless you; and grant you length of days, fair children, progress in life and faith; and fill you with all earthly good things, and make you worthy to enjoy the good things of the promise; through the prayers of the holy Theotokos and of all the saints.

Pp: Amen.

D: Wisdom!

P: Most holy Theotokos, save us!

Pp: More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim; without defilement you gave birth to God the Word: true Theotokos, we magnify you.

P: Glory to Thee, O Christ our God and our hope, glory to Thee.

Pp: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (3)

Father, bless.

P: May He who by His presence in Cana of Galilee declared marriage to be honorable, Christ our true God, through the prayers of His most pure mother; of the holy, glorious, and all-laudable apostles; of the holy, God-crowned kings Constantine and Helen, equal to the apostles; of the holy great martyr Procopius; and of all the saints: have mercy on us and save us, for He is good and loves mankind.

Pp: Amen.

