

IV. HOLY MATRIMONY

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HOLY MATRIMONY

Preparatory Notes

Before the following *Orders* are performed certain conditions must be met on the part of those being joined. In addition, various determinations must be made by the Priest or Bishop, as appropriate. Areas of concern include: are both parties Orthodox; has there been a previous civil marriage; have either been divorced; if a mixed marriage, is the non-Orthodox partner Christian or non-Christian; may non-Orthodox clergy actively participate, or may Orthodox clergy actively participate in non-Orthodox weddings; etc.? (For these and other concerns, the Bishop must be consulted. In addition, the Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America has published an *Encyclical Letter on Marriage* including an *Appendix* containing *Pastoral Guidelines on Holy Matrimony*.)

Marriage may not be celebrated on all days of the year. Hence, it is not permitted to “Crown” a marriage at the following times: 1) From November 14 (the Day of the Apostle Philip) until after January 6 (Holy Theophany); 2) From the Sunday of Meatfare (Cheesefare Week) until St. Thomas Sunday; 3) From the Sunday of All Saints until June 29 (the whole of the Apostles’ Fast); 4) From August 1 until August 15 (the whole of the Dormition Fast); 5) Wednesdays and Fridays, being fasting days; 6) All Saturdays (being the Eve of Sunday Resurrection services); 7) the Eves of Great Feasts of the Lord and the Theotokos (on September 13 and 14—the Eve and the Day itself of the Elevation of the Cross); 8) the Eves of certain other Feastdays: October 1 (Protection of the Theotokos), August 28 and 29 (the Eve and Feastday itself of the Beheading of the Forerunner), and other Eves of major Feasts: (September 25 and May 8—St. John the Theologian; December 6—St. Nicholas); 9) the Eves of patronal Feasts of parish churches and monasteries.

Concerning the time of day in which it is permitted to “Crown” a marriage, the general rule consists of the following: the “Crowning” of a marriage is performed after Divine Liturgy, during the daytime hours, and must not occur after the evening service of Vespers, that is, at night.

Concerning the place for the celebration of the Mystery of Holy Matrimony, it must be performed in the church. The “Crowning” of a marriage may not be performed at other places: chapels, house chapels, etc. In cases of extreme

circumstances, such as when there is no church nearby, the “Crowning” of a marriage may take place in a chapel with the permission of the Bishop.

In the middle of the church there is placed a small table for the Cross and Gospel Book; flanking it on the left—an analogion is set, on which rests the **Book of Needs**. Before the table, on the side facing the entrance of the temple, customarily there is spread a white or rose-colored cloth or a new rug onto which the bridal pair will be led.

When the bridegroom and bride enter the temple and stand at the appointed place—the bridegroom on the right, and the bride on the left, the Priest comes out to them through the Holy Doors, carrying the Cross and Gospel Book; and before him is carried a candlestick with lit candle. And, having circled the small table, he sets the candlestick before it, on the side facing the Altar. The Priest sets the Cross and the Gospel Book on the table. And he takes from the bridegroom and the bride their rings (the bridegroom’s should be made of gold, and the bride’s of silver, although in modern practice they are often both of gold), and takes them into the Altar, where he lays them on the right side of the Holy Table, near each other, the bride’s on the right and the bridegroom’s on the left. Then he comes out of the Altar to the center of the church for the beginning of the Service.

Special Note Concerning the Rings

The aforementioned *rubric* concerning the rings presupposes that the **Betrothal** is performed at a time apart from the **Crowning**. If the **Crowning** is to be performed immediately after the **Betrothal** (as is commonly the case now), then the rings should have been placed on the Holy Table before the Divine Liturgy which takes place immediately before the **Betrothal**. When the Priest comes out of the Altar for the beginning of the **Betrothal**, he is followed by the Deacon carrying the rings on a special silver tray.

The Deacon takes two lit tapers and gives them to the Priest. The Priest, blessing the bridegroom with one lit taper (*thrice*), gives it to him; likewise, he blesses the bride and gives her the other lit taper. (Although the **Book of Needs** states that “the Priest signs the heads of the bridal pair thrice, and gives them lit tapers”, customarily the Priest blesses the bridegroom and bride *with* the tapers as mentioned above.)

After this, having censed in crosswise form around the small table, on which lies the Cross and Gospel Book, he begins the Order of Betrothal.

THE ORDER THAT IS USED AT BETROTHALS

After the Divine Liturgy, while the Priest stands in the Sanctuary (i.e., the Nave, the main part of the church), they that desire to be joined together stand before the Royal Doors (i.e., the doors leading into the Sanctuary (Nave)), the man on the right side and the woman on the left. And on the right side of the Holy Table are laid their two rings, a golden one and a silver one—the silver one towards the right and the golden one towards the left, close to one another. And the Priest makes the Sign of the Cross thrice over the heads of the over the bridal pair, and gives them lit tapers.

[Fr Geoffrey notes: The following questions are moved here from the beginning of the Crowning service where the Book of Needs has them.]

The Priest shall inquire of the bridegroom, saying:

Do you, *N.*, have a good and unconstrained will, and a firm intention to take unto yourself this woman, *N.*, whom you see here before you?

And the bridegroom answers, saying:

I have, reverend Father.

The Priest again:

You have not promised yourself to another bride?

The bridegroom:

I have not promised myself, reverend Father.

And immediately the Priest, looking at the bride, shall inquire of her, saying:

Do you, *N.*, have a good and unconstrained will, and a firm intention to take unto yourself this man, *N.*, whom you see here before you?

And the bride answers, saying:

I have, reverend Father.

The Priest again:

You have not promised yourself to any other man?

The bride:

I have not promised myself, reverend Father.

Then by the Deacon is said:

Bless, Master.

And the Priest:

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

Choir: Amen.

Deacon: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. *(after each petition)*

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

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.

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

For our Metropolitan (*N.*); for our Bishop [*or Archbishop*] (*N.*); for the honorable Priesthood, the Diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

For the servant of God, *N.*, and for the handmaid of God, *N.*, who are now being betrothed to one another, and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

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

That there may be sent down upon them perfect and peaceful love, and assistance, let us pray to the Lord.

That they may be preserved in oneness of mind and steadfast faith, let us pray to the Lord.

That they may be blessed with a blameless life, let us pray to the Lord.

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

That He will deliver us from all tribulation, wrath and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

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

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.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

Priest: 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 the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Then he says the Prayer with a loud voice:

O God eternal, Who bringest them that are divided unto unity, and hast appointed for them an indissoluble bond of love, Who didst bless Isaac and Rebekah, and show them to be heirs of Thy promise: Do Thou Thyself bless also these Thy servants, *N.*, and *N.*, guiding them unto every good work. For Thou art a merciful God and the Lover of Mankind, and unto Thee do we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

Choir: And to Thy spirit.

Deacon: Bow your heads unto the Lord.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

And the Priest reads this Prayer:

O Lord our God, Who hast espoused the Church as a pure virgin from among the nations: Do Thou bless this betrothal, and unite and keep these Thy servants in peace and oneness of mind. For unto Thee is due all glory, honor and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Then the Priest, taking the rings, gives first the golden one to the man, then the silver one to the woman. And he says (thrice) to the man:

The servant of God, *N.*, is betrothed to the handmaid of God, *N.*, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then he says (thrice) to the woman:

The handmaid of God, *N.*, is betrothed to the servant of God, *N.*, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

And when he has spoken thus to each one thrice, he makes the Sign of the Cross with the rings upon their heads, and places them on the fingers of their right hands. Then the sponsor changes the rings of the bridal pair.

Although the ***Book of Needs*** indicates that the bridegroom is given his own ring and the bride her own, before the mutual exchange, in modern practice the following usually is followed: the Priest takes the *silver* ring and each time he pronounces the aforementioned words over the bridegroom he blesses him with it. Then he places the ring on a finger of the right hand (usually the fourth finger) of the bridegroom. In the same manner he blesses the bride with the *golden* ring and places it on a finger (usually the fourth) of her right hand. Having received the rings, the betrothed immediately exchange their rings thrice.

Then the Priest says the Prayer:

O Lord our God, Who didst accompany the servant of the patriarch Abraham to 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 Rebekah: Do Thou Thyself bless the betrothal of these Thy servants, *N.* and *N.*, and confirm the promise that has been made by them. Establish them in the holy union which is from Thee. For Thou, from the beginning, hast made them male and female, and by Thee the woman is joined unto the man as a helper and for succession of the generation of man. Therefore, O Lord our God, Who hast sent forth Thy truth unto Thine inheritance, and Thy promise unto Thy servants, our fathers, Thine elect from generation to generation: Do Thou Thyself look down upon Thy servant, *N.*, and Thy handmaid, *N.*, and confirm their betrothal in faith and in oneness of mind, and in truth and in love. For Thou, O Lord, hast shown that a pledge should be given and confirmed in everything. By a ring power was given unto 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 compassion upon His son. For He said: "Put a ring upon his right hand, and kill the fatted calf, and let us eat and rejoice." Thine own right hand, O Lord, armed Moses in the Red Sea; for by Thy true word the heavens were established and the earth firmly founded; and the right hand of Thy servants shall be blessed by Thy mighty word, and by Thine uplifted arm. Therefore, O Master, do Thou Thyself now bless this putting-on of rings with Thy heavenly blessing; and may Thine Angel go before them all the days of their life. For Thou art He that blesseth

and sanctifieth all things, and unto Thee do we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

And immediately the Deacon this litany:

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*thrice, after each petition*)

Again we pray for our Metropolitan (*N.*); for our Bishop [*or Archbishop*] (*N.*); and for all our brethren in Christ.

Again we pray for the servants of God, *N.* and *N.*, who have been betrothed to one another.

And the Priest says the Exclamation:

For Thou art a merciful God, and the Lover of Mankind, and unto Thee do we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Priest: Glory to Thee, O Christ our God, and our Hope, glory to Thee.

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

Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

Father, bless.

And the Priest makes the Dismissal.

According to modern practice, the Litany and Dismissal are usually omitted and the Order of the Crowning immediately follows, although there is no prohibition against performing the Betrothal separately (at another time), in which case the Litany and Dismissal would be said.

THE ORDER OF THE CROWNING

Now if at the same time they desire to be crowned, they go into the church with lit tapers, preceded by the Priest with censer, and singing Psalm 127(8) thus. And the people sing after each verse: Glory to Thee, O our God, glory to Thee.

Blessed are all they that fear the Lord.
 They that walk in His ways.
 The fruit of thy labors shalt thou eat.
 Blessed art thou, and well shall it be with thee.
 Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine on the sides of thy house,
 Thy sons like young olive shoots round about thy table.
 Behold, thus shall the man be blessed that fears the Lord.
 The Lord shall bless thee out of Sion, and thou shalt see the good things of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.
 And thou shalt see the sons of thy sons. Peace be upon Israel.

Then the Deacon says:

Bless, master.

The Priest:

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

Choir: Amen.

And immediately the Deacon says the Litany.

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. *(after each petition)*

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

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.

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

For our Metropolitan (N.); for our Bishop [*or Archbishop*] (N.); for the honorable Priesthood, the Diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

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

That this marriage may be blessed as was that in Cana of Galilee, let us pray to the Lord.

That there may be vouchsafed unto them chastity, and fruit of the womb as is expedient for them, let us pray to the Lord.

That they will be made glad with the sight of sons and daughters, let us pray to the Lord.

That there may be granted unto them the acquisition of fair children, and a blameless life, let us pray to the Lord.

That there may be granted unto them and unto us all petitions that are unto salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

That they and we may be delivered from every affliction, wrath and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

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

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.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

The Priest, with a loud voice:

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 the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

The Priest, with a loud voice, this Prayer:

O God most pure, and the Fashioner of all creation, Who, through Thy love for mankind, didst transform a rib of Adam the forefather into a woman, and didst bless them, and say: "Increase and multiply, and have dominion over the earth"; and, by the union, didst declare them both to be one *flesh*; for this cause shall a

man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and the two shall be one flesh, and what God has joined together, let no man put asunder; Who didst also bless Thy servant Abraham, and open the womb of Sarah, and didst make him the father of many nations; Who didst give Isaac to Rebekah, and didst bless her offspring; Who didst join Jacob unto Rachel, and from them didst make manifest the twelve Patriarchs; Who didst unite Joseph and Aseneth, and as the fruit of their procreation didst bestow upon them Ephraim and Manasseh; Who didst accept Zachariah and Elizabeth, and didst show their offspring to be the Forerunner; Who, from the root of Jesse according to the flesh, didst bud forth the Ever-Virgin, and from her wast made flesh and wast born for the salvation of the human race; Who, through Thine ineffable grace and great goodness, wast present in Cana of Galilee, and didst bless the marriage there, that Thou mightest show that a lawful union, and procreation therefrom is according to Thy will. Do Thou Thyself, O Most-holy Master, accept the prayer of us, Thy servants, and, with Thine invisible presence being here, as there, do Thou bless this marriage, and give unto Thy servants, *N. and N.*, a peaceful life, length of days, chastity, love for one another in the bond of peace, long-lived offspring, grace upon their children, and an unfading crown of glory. Count them worthy to see their children's children; preserve their bed undefiled; and give them of the dew of heaven from above, and of the fatness of the earth. Fill their houses with wheat, wine and oil, and with every good thing, that they may give in turn to them that are in need, bestowing also unto those here present with them all petitions which are for salvation. For Thou art a God of mercies and compassions, and love for mankind, and unto Thee do we send up glory, together with Thy Father Who is without beginning, and Thy Most-holy, Good and Lifegiving Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

The Priest, with a loud voice, this Prayer:

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, Thou Priest of mystical and pure marriage, and Giver of the law of the marriage of the body; Preserver of incorruption, and good Provider of the things of life; the Same, O Master, Who, in the beginning didst create man, and didst appoint him as the king of creation, and didst say, "It is not good that man should be alone upon the earth. Let us make a helper fit for him"; and, taking one of his ribs, didst make woman, whom seeing, Adam said, "This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, for 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 Thyself now,

O Master, Lord our God, send down Thy heavenly grace upon these Thy servants, *N.* and *N.*, and grant unto this Thine handmaid to be in all things subject unto the man, and to this Thy servant to be the head of the woman, that they may live according to Thy will. Bless them, O Lord our God, as Thou didst bless Isaac and Rebekah. 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 Zachariah 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, and Elijah. Remember them, O Lord our God, as Thou didst remember Thy Holy Forty Martyrs, sending down upon them crowns from Heaven. Remember, O God, 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 groomsman and bridesmaid, who have come together in this joy. Remember, O Lord our God, Thy servant, *N.*, and Thy handmaid, *N.*, and bless them. Grant them fruit of the womb, fair children, and oneness of soul and body. Exalt them as the cedars of Lebanon, and as a well-cultured vine. Bestow upon them offspring in number like unto full ears of grain, that, having sufficiency in all things, they may abound in every work that is good and acceptable unto Thee. And let them see their children's children like newly-planted olive trees round about their table; that, finding favor in Thy sight, they may shine as the stars in Heaven unto Thee, our God. And, together with Thee, be glory, dominion, honor, and worship, to Thy Father Who is without beginning, and to Thy Lifegiving Spirit; now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

And again the Priest says this Prayer with a loud voice:

O Holy God, Who didst form man from the dust, and from his rib didst fashion woman and didst join her unto him as a helper for him, for it seemed good unto Thy majesty that man should not be alone upon the earth: Do Thou Thyself now, O Master, stretch forth Thy hand from Thy holy dwelling-place, and join together this Thy servant, *N.*, and this Thy handmaid, *N.*, for by Thee is a man joined to a woman. Unite them in oneness of mind, crown them in one flesh, granting them fruit of the womb, and the gain of fair children. For Thine is the might, and Thine

are 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 the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

And after the "Amen" the Priest, taking the crowns, crowns first the bridegroom, saying:

The servant of God, *N.*, is crowned for the handmaid of God, *N.*, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Then he crowns also the bride, saying:

The handmaid of God, *N.*, is crowned for the servant of God, *N.*, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The Priest takes the first crown, on which there is a representation of the Savior, makes with it the Sign of the Cross over the head of the bridegroom, and, giving the bridegroom to kiss the representation of the Savior on the crown, sets it on his head. In like manner he sets the second crown, on which there is a representation of the Mother of God, on the head of the bride.

Then the Priest blesses them thrice, saying each time:

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

Then:

Deacon: Let us attend.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

Reader: And to your spirit.

Deacon: Wisdom.

Reader: The Prokeimenon in the Eighth Tone:

(Prokeimenon, **TONE 8:**)

Thou hast set upon his head a crown of precious stone. He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest *it unto* him. (20:4–5)

Choir: Thou hast set upon his head a crown of precious stone. He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest *it unto* him.

Reader: **Vs.** For Thou shalt grant him a blessing unto ages of ages; Thou shalt make him glad with joy at Thy countenance. (20:7)

Choir: Thou hast set upon his head a crown of precious stone. He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest *it unto* him.

Reader: Thou hast set upon his head a crown of precious stone.

Choir: He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest *it unto* him.

Deacon: Wisdom.

Reader: The Reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Ephesians.

Deacon: Let us attend.

*And the Reader reads the lesson from the **Apostol:***

The Epistle to the Ephesians (*Pericope 230—Eph. 5:20–33*):

Brethren: Give thanks always for all things unto God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church, and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loves the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the bath of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having filth, or defect, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourishes and warms it, even as the Lord the Church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and the two shall be one flesh.” This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church. Nevertheless, let every one in particular so love his wife even as himself, and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Priest: Peace be unto you.

Reader: And to your spirit.

Priest: Wisdom.

Reader: Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

(Alleluia, **TONE 5**.)

Choir: Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Reader: **Vs.** Thou, O Lord, shalt keep us and preserve us from this generation, and forevermore. (*11:8*)

Choir: Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Deacon: Wisdom. Let us attend. Let us listen to the Holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

Choir: And to your spirit.

Priest: The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to *Saint John*.

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

Deacon: Let us attend.

And the Priest reads the Gospel:

The Gospel according to John (*Pericope 6—John 2:1–11*):

At that time there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; and both Jesus and His disciples were called to the marriage. And when there was not sufficient wine, the mother of Jesus said unto Him, “They have no wine.” Jesus said unto her, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Whatsoever He says unto you, do it.” And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, holding two or three measures apiece. Jesus said unto them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. And He said unto them, “Draw some out now, and bear it unto the governor of the feast.” And they took it. When the governor of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, not knowing from whence it had come (but the servants who drew the water knew), the governor of the feast called in the bridegroom and said unto him, “Every man at the beginning sets forth good wine, and when men have drunk well, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now.” This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and made manifest His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

Choir: Glory to Thee, O our God, glory to Thee.

Then the Deacon chants the Litany:

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

Deacon: Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, and visitation for the servants of God, *N.* and *N.* (*and he commemorates whom he wishes*), and for the pardon and remission of their sins.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

And the Priest says the Exclamation:

For Thou art a merciful God, and the Lover of Mankind, and unto Thee do we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

The Priest, this Prayer:

O Lord our God, Who, in Thy saving providence, didst vouchsafe by Thy presence in Cana of Galilee to declare marriage honorable: Do Thou Thyself now preserve in peace and oneness of mind Thy servants, *N.* and *N.*, whom Thou hast been well-pleased to join together. Show their marriage to be honorable; preserve their bed undefiled; be well-pleased that their life together may be undefiled, and count them worthy to attain unto a ripe old age, keeping Thy commandments with a pure heart. For Thou art our God, the God of mercy and salvation, and unto Thee do we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir: Grant it, O Lord. (*after each petition*)

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

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

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

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

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.

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.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

Priest: 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:

And the people: Our Father ... *(all to the end).*

The Priest exclaims: For Thine is the Kingdom....

Peace be unto all.

Choir: And to your spirit.

Deacon: Bow your heads unto the Lord.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

Then the common cup (with wine) is brought, and the Priest blesses it, and says this Prayer:

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

O God, Who hast created all things by Thy might, and hast made firm the world, and adornest the crown of things created by Thee: Do Thou, with Thy spiritual blessing, bless this common cup which Thou givest unto them that are joined together for the communion of marriage.

With a loud voice:

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 the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Then the Priest, taking in his hand the common cup, gives it to them to drink thrice, first to the man, and then to the woman. And immediately the Priest takes them, the groomsman behind them, holding their crowns, and leads them in the form of a circle.

The Priest, joins together the hands of the Bridal Pair, right hand to right hand, and lays over their joined hands the end of his Epitrachelion. And holding it with his own hand, he leads them around the small table three times—the first time during the singing of the first troparion, the second during the singing of the second troparion, and the third during the singing of the third troparion.

*And the Priest, (or the people (or Choir)) sings the following Troparion, **TONE 5:***

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

*Others, **TONE 7:***

O holy Martyrs, who fought the good fight and have received your crowns: Pray to the Lord that He will be merciful to our souls.

Glory to Thee, O Christ God, the Apostles' boast, the Martyrs' joy, whose preaching was the Consubstantial Trinity.

Then, taking the crown from the bridegroom, he says:

Be exalted, O bridegroom, like unto Abraham; and be blessed, like unto Isaac; and be multiplied like unto Jacob, walking in peace, and doing, in righteousness, the commandments of God.

And, taking the crown from the bride, he says:

And you, O bride, be exalted like unto Sarah; and be glad, like unto Rebekah; and be multiplied, like unto Rachel. Rejoice in your husband, keeping the terms of the law, for so is God well-pleased.

When the Priest takes the crown from the bridegroom, he makes with it the Sign of the Cross over the head of the bridegroom and extends it to the bridegroom that he may kiss the representation of the Savior on the crown. In like manner, when he takes the crown from the bride he extends it to her that she may kiss the representation of the Mother of God on the crown.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

The Priest, the Prayer:

O God, our God, Who didst come to Cana of Galilee, and didst bless the marriage there: Do Thou bless also these Thy servants, who, by Thy providence, are joined together in the communion of marriage. Bless their comings in and their goings out, replenish their life with good things, *and* accept their crowns in Thy Kingdom, preserving them spotless, undefiled, and without reproach, unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

Choir: And to your spirit.

Deacon: Bow your heads unto the Lord.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

And the Priest prays:

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 unto you length of days, fair children, success in life and faith, and fill you with all earthly good things, and count you worthy to obtain the blessings of the promise; through the prayers of the holy Theotokos, and of all the Saints. Amen.

According to modern practice, the Prayer at the Taking Off of the Crowns on the Eighth Day is said at this point and what follows here is deferred until the end.

Then the people come and congratulate them, and they kiss one another. And the full Dismissal is made by the Priest.

Deacon: Wisdom.

Choir: It is truly meet to bless thee, O Theotokos, ever blessed and most pure and the Mother of our God, more honorable than the Cherubim and, more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim. Without defilement thou gavest birth to God the Word. True Theotokos, we magnify thee.

Priest: Glory to Thee, O Christ our God, and our Hope, glory to Thee.

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

Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

Father, bless.

The Priest, the Dismissal:

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-praised Apostles, of the holy, God-crowned sovereigns and equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine and Helen, of the holy greatmartyr Procopius, and of all the Saints, have mercy upon us and save us, for He is Good and the Lover of Mankind.

Choir: Amen.

PRAYER AT THE TAKING OFF OF THE CROWNS

on the eighth day

O Lord our God, Who blessest the crown of the year, and permittest these crowns to be laid on them that are joined to one another by the law of marriage, and thus granting these unto them as the reward of chastity, for they are pure that are joined together in the lawfully appointed marriage that is from Thee: Do Thou Thyself also, in the taking off of these crowns, bless them that have been joined together, and preserve their union unbroken, that they may ever give thanks unto Thine all-holy Name: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

Choir: And to your spirit.

Deacon: Bow your heads unto the Lord.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

The Priest says:

Thy servants having come together in concord, O Lord, and having accomplished the order of marriage, as at Cana in Galilee, and having contracted the signs thereof, send up glory unto Thee: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

And the Dismissal.

**THE SCROLL OF NICEPHORUS, PATRIARCH OF
CONSTANTINOPLE AND CONFESSOR**

“One who is married for a second time is not crowned, and it is forbidden to commune of the Holy Mysteries for two years; and one who is married for a third time, for three years.” (II Canon of St. Nicephorus)

From the reply of the blessed Nicetas, Metropolitan of Heraclea, to a question from Bishop Constantine:

“The judgement of the law, therefore, is that it is not customary to crown; but the Great Church (Constantinople), does not keep this, and for those marrying a second time it lays crowns, and no one is reproached for this. Otherwise, they that enter into a second marriage are forbidden Divine Communion for one or two years. But the Priest who serves this Service is not permitted to sup with them, according to the Seventh Canon of the Council of Neo-Caesarea.”

THE OFFICE FOR A SECOND MARRIAGE

Preparatory Notes

The bridegroom—a widower after the first or second marriage, and the bride—a widow after the first or second marriage, are crowned according to “the Office for a Second Marriage”. (If, however, the bridegroom is unmarried, but the bride is a widow, or vice versa, then, customarily, the “Order of the Crowning” is performed, as for a First Marriage.) In any case, before the “Office for a Second Marriage” can be performed, the Bishop must be consulted and his permission obtained. It must also be noted that whereas the Holy Church permits second and even third marriages, this is granted reluctantly. Concerning a fourth marriage, however, permission cannot be granted.

In cases where either one or both of the parties are divorced, the Bishop must be consulted.

Concerning the days and times when the marriage ceremony may be celebrated, as well as the place where such a ceremony may be celebrated, see the **Preparatory Notes** for the celebration of a first marriage.

The same preparations concerning the appurtenances, rings, etc., are made as at the Office for a First Marriage.

THE BETROTHAL

After the Divine Liturgy, while the Priest stands in the Sanctuary (i.e., the Nave, the main part of the church), they that desire to be joined together stand before the Royal Doors (i.e., the doors leading into the main part of the church), the man on the right side and the woman on the left. And on the right side of the Holy Table are laid their two rings, a golden one and a silver one—the silver one towards the right and the golden one towards the left, close to one another. And the Priest makes the Sign of the Cross thrice over the heads of the bridal pair. And he leads them within the temple. And he censes in cross-wise form. And by the Deacon is said:

Bless, Master.

The Priest begins:

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

Then: Amen. O Heavenly King.... Holy God ... Glory ... O Most-holy Trinity ... Lord, have mercy (thrice). Glory ... Our Father ... For Thine is the Kingdom.... Then the Dismissal Troparion of the Day.

Then, the Litany:

Deacon: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*after each petition*)

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

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.

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

For the servants of God, *N.* and *N.*, and for the protection which is from God, and for their life together, let us pray to the Lord.

That they may live together uprightly and in oneness of mind, let us pray to the Lord.

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

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.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

Priest: 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 the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

The Priest says this Prayer:

O God eternal, Who bringest them that are divided unto unity, and hast appointed for them an indissoluble bond of love, Who didst bless Isaac and Rebekah, and show them to be heirs of Thy promise: Do Thou Thyself bless also these Thy servants, *N.*, and *N.*, guiding them unto every good work. For Thou art a merciful God and the Lover of Mankind, and unto Thee do we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

Choir: And to Thy spirit.

Deacon: Bow your heads unto the Lord.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

And the Priest says the following Prayer:

O Lord our God, Who hast espoused the Church as a pure virgin from among the nations: Do Thou bless this betrothal, and unite and keep these Thy servants in peace and oneness of mind. For unto Thee is due all glory, honor and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

After these Prayers, the Deacon (or the Priest himself) brings the rings from the Altar.

Then the Priest, taking the rings, gives first the golden one to the man, then the silver one to the woman. And he says to the man:

The servant of God, *N.*, is betrothed to the handmaid of God, *N.*, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then he says to the woman:

The handmaid of God, *N.*, is betrothed to the servant of God, *N.*, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

And when he has spoken thus to each one thrice, he makes the Sign of the Cross with the rings upon their heads, and places them on the fingers of their right hands. Then the sponsor changes the rings of the bridal pair.

Although the ***Book of Needs*** indicates that the bridegroom is given his own ring and the bride her own, before the mutual exchange, in modern practice the following usually is followed: the Priest takes the *silver* ring and each time he pronounces the aforementioned words over the bridegroom he blesses him with it. Then he places the ring on a finger of the right hand (usually the fourth finger) of the bridegroom. In the same manner he blesses the bride with the *golden* ring and places it on a finger (usually the fourth) of her right hand. Having received the rings, the betrothed immediately exchange their rings thrice.

Then the Priest says the Prayer:

O Master, Lord our God, Who sparest all and providest for all, Who knowest the secrets of men and hast understanding of all things: Do Thou the Fashioner and Creator, Who knowest the weakness of human nature, cleanse our sins, and

forgive the transgression of Thy servants, calling them to repentance, granting them remission of iniquities, cleansing of sins, *and* forgiveness of transgressions, whether voluntary or involuntary. O Thou Who didst forgive Rahab the harlot, and didst accept the repentance of the Publican, remember not our sins of ignorance from our youth up. For if Thou shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, Lord, who should stand before Thee! Or what flesh should be justified before Thee? For Thou only art righteous, sinless, holy, plenteous in mercy, of great compassion, and Who turnest away from the evils of men. Do Thou Thyself, O Master, Who hast taken unto Thyself Thy servants, *N. and N.*, unite them to one another in love; grant unto them the conversion of the Publican, the tears of the Harlot, and the confession of the Thief, that, through repentance with all their heart, doing Thy commandment in peace and oneness of mind, they may be counted worthy of Thy heavenly Kingdom. For Thou art He that ordereth all things, and unto Thee do we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

Choir: And to your spirit.

Deacon: Bow your heads unto the Lord.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

And the Priest says this Prayer:

O Lord Jesus Christ, Word of God, Who wast lifted up upon the precious and lifegiving Cross, and didst thereby tear up the handwriting against us, and didst deliver us from the violence of the devil: Do Thou cleanse the transgressions of Thy servants, for, unable to bear the burden and the heat of the day, and the burning of the flesh, they have come to a second communion of marriage, in accordance with that which Thou hast lawfully appointed by Thy chosen vessel, Paul the Apostle, saying, because of our humble estate, "It is better to marry in the Lord than to burn". Do Thou Thyself, as Thou art Good and the Lover of Mankind, have mercy, and pardon, cleanse, cast off and forgive our debts, for Thou art He that tooketh our infirmities upon Thy shoulders. For there is none that is sinless, or without defilement for so much as one day of his life, save only Thou, Who, without sin, didst bear flesh, and Who bestowest upon us eternal passionlessness. For Thou art God, the God of them that repent, and unto Thee do we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

THE CROWNING

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

And the Priest says this Prayer:

O Holy God, Who didst form man from the dust, and from his rib didst fashion woman and didst join her unto him as a helper for him, for it seemed good unto Thy majesty that man should not be alone upon the earth: Do Thou Thyself now, O Master, stretch forth Thy hand from Thy holy dwelling-place, and join together this Thy servant, *N.*, and this Thy handmaid, *N.*, for by Thee is a man joined to a woman. Unite them in oneness of mind, crown them in one flesh, granting them fruit of the womb, and the gain of fair children. For Thine is the might, and Thine are 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 the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

And the rest of the Office is the same as that for a first marriage.