

A Service of Marriage

Words to be said are in this style: **All:** say these words.

Instructions are in italics.

This service may be taken by those in minor orders out of necessity, but it is preferred if the minister is deacon or priest. The laws of each land vary considerably in regard to the solemnization and registration of marriage. It is the duty of the minister to ensure that all legal preliminaries have been followed, and that the law may be upheld by holding this service and the registration of the marriage. If any doubt exists, this service must be postponed until the legal formalities have been confirmed. Ministers and those being married can consider being legally married at the civic registry office beforehand, and this service said in its entirety will then be legally considered as a blessing. The homily, if given, should be up to ten minutes, but no more.

Introit

The minister welcomes the people using these or other appropriate words:

Minister: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all. Amen.

Minister: John's Gospel says:
God is love, and those who live in love, live in God
and God lives in them. (1 John 4.16)

Minister: Let us pray

All: God of wonder and of joy:
grace comes from you,
and you alone are the source of life and love.
Without you, we cannot please you;
without your love, our deeds are worth nothing.
Send your Holy Spirit,
and pour into our hearts
that most excellent gift of love,
that we may worship you now
with thankful hearts
and serve you always with willing minds;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

A hymn may be sung.

Preface

Minister: In the presence of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we have come together to witness the marriage of N and N, to pray for God's blessing on them, to share their joy and to celebrate their love.

Marriage is a gift of God in creation through which husband and wife may know the grace of God.

It is given that as man and woman grow together in love and trust, they shall be united with one another in heart, body and mind, as Christ is united with his bride, the Church. The gift of marriage brings husband and wife together in the delight and tenderness of sexual union and joyful commitment to the end of their lives.

It is given as the foundation of family life in which children are born and nurtured and in which each member of the family, in good times and in bad, may find strength, companionship and comfort, and grow to maturity in love.

Marriage is a way of life made holy by God, and blessed by the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ with those celebrating a wedding at Cana in Galilee.

Marriage is a sign of unity and loyalty which all should uphold and honour. It enriches society and strengthens community. No one should enter into it lightly or selfishly but reverently and responsibly in the sight of almighty God. N and N are now to enter this way of life. They will each give their consent to the other and make solemn vows, and in token of this they will [each] give and receive a ring.

We pray with them that the Holy Spirit will guide and strengthen them, that they may fulfil God's purposes for the whole of their earthly life together.

The Declarations

The minister says to the congregation:

Minister: First, I am required to ask anyone present who knows a reason why these persons may not lawfully marry, to declare it now. However, let anyone who does come forward be mindful of their own estate.

The minister says to the couple:

Minister: The vows you are about to take are to be made in the presence of God, who is judge of all and knows all the secrets of our hearts; therefore if either of you knows a reason why you may not lawfully marry, you must declare it now.

The minister says to the bridegroom:

Minister: N, will you take N to be your wife?
Will you love her, comfort her, honour and protect her,
and, forsaking all others,
be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

Bridegroom: I will.

The minister says to the bride:

Minister: N, will you take N to be your husband?
Will you love him, comfort him, honour and protect him,
and, forsaking all others,
be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

Bride: I will.

The minister says to the congregation:

Minister: Will you, the families and friends of N and N,
support and uphold them in their marriage
now and in the years to come?

All: We will.

The Collect

The minister invites the people to pray, silence is kept and the minister says the Collect

Minister: God our Father,
from the beginning

you have blessed creation with abundant life.
Pour out your blessings upon N and N,
that they may be joined in mutual love and companionship,
in holiness and commitment to each other.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
All: Amen.

Readings

At least one reading from the Bible is used.

A Homily may be given

A hymn may be sung.

The Vows

The couple stand before the minister.

The minister introduces the vows in these or similar words:

Minister: N and N, I now invite you to join hands and make your vows,
in the presence of God and his people.

The bride and bridegroom face each other.

The bridegroom takes the bride's right hand in his.

Bridegroom says: I, N, take you, N,
to be my wife,
to have and to hold
from this day forward;
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till death us do part;
according to God's holy law.
In the presence of God I make this vow.

They loose hands.

The bride takes the bridegroom's right hand in hers, and says:

Bride says: I, N, take you, N,
to be my husband,
to have and to hold
from this day forward;
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till death us do part;
according to God's holy law.
In the presence of God I make this vow.

They loose hands.

The Giving of Rings

The minister receives the ring(s), and says this prayer:

Minister: Heavenly Father, by your blessing
let these rings be to N and N
a symbol of unending love and faithfulness,
to remind them of the vow and covenant
which they have made this day
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The bridegroom places the ring on the fourth finger of the bride's left hand and, holding it there, says:

Bridegroom says: N, I give you this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

[this part is omitted if only one ring is given]

If rings are exchanged, they loose hands and the bride places a ring on the fourth finger of the bridegroom's left hand and, holding it there, says:

Bride says: N, I give you this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,

and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Proclamation

The minister addresses the people

Minister: In the presence of God, and before this congregation,
N and N have given their consent
and made their marriage vows to each other.
They have declared their marriage by the joining of hands
and by the giving and receiving of rings.
I therefore proclaim that they are husband and wife.

The minister joins their right hands together and says:

Minister: Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.

The Blessing of the Marriage

The husband and wife kneel. The minister may use the following blessing:

Minister: Blessed are you, O Lord our God,
for you have created joy and gladness,
pleasure and delight, love, peace and fellowship.
Pour out the abundance of your blessing
upon N and N in their new life together.
Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts
and a crown upon their heads.
Bless them in their work and in their companionship;
awake and asleep,
in joy and in sorrow,
in life and in death.

Minister: Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that banquet
where your saints feast for ever in your heavenly home.
We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All: Amen.

The minister says to the couple

Minister: God the Father,
God the Son,
God the Holy Spirit,
bless, preserve and keep you;
the Lord mercifully grant you the riches of his grace,
that you may please him both in body and soul,
and, living together in faith and love,
may receive the blessings of eternal life.

All: Amen.

Registration of the Marriage

See notes above. The procedure for signing of registers varies widely between different jurisdictions. The minister must satisfy him/her self that the process has been correctly followed before this service begins. Sometimes a legal registrar needs to be present in which case the registration is overseen by them.

A hymn or psalm may be used, or a poem or musical piece may be performed during the registration.

Prayers

[suitable prayers are used]. The prayers usually include these concerns and may follow this sequence: Thanksgiving - Spiritual growth - Faithfulness, joy, love, forgiveness and healing - Children, other family members and friends

Minister: Faithful God,
holy and eternal,
source of life and spring of love,
we thank and praise you for bringing N and N to this day,
and we pray for them.

Minister: Lord of life and love:

All: Hear our prayer.

Minister: May their marriage be life-giving and life-long,
enriched by your presence and strengthened by your grace;
may they bring comfort and confidence to each other
in faithfulness and trust.

Minister: Lord of life and love:

All: Hear our prayer.

Minister: May the hospitality of their home
bring refreshment and joy to all around them;
may their love overflow to neighbours in need
and embrace those in distress.

Minister: Lord of life and love:

All: Hear our prayer.

Minister: May they discern in your word
order and purpose for their lives;
and may the power of your Holy Spirit
lead them in truth and defend them in adversity.

Minister: Lord of life and love:

All: Hear our prayer.

Minister: May they nurture their family with devotion,
see their children grow in body, mind and spirit
and come at last to the end of their lives
with hearts content and in joyful anticipation of heaven.

Minister: Lord of life and love:

All: Hear our prayer.

The prayers conclude with the Lord's Prayer.

Minister: As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

All: 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.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

A hymn may be sung.

Mass may be celebrated here and if so, the final blessing is omitted.

The Dismissal

The minister says:

Minister: God the Holy Trinity make you both strong in faith and love,
defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All: Amen.

Please pray for the couple who were married today, their families and friends, the people who attended this service, your families, work and neighbourhood. Please also pray for the Old Catholic Apostolic Church.