

THE ORDER OF BLESSING A CIVIL OR HETERODOX MARRIAGE AFTER MANY YEARS

This order of service is one approved by the Pastoral Conference of the Australian-New Zealand Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia in 1983. As it is served after many years of marriage, the text set out here also incorporates elements of the 'Moleben of Thanksgiving for the receiving of a petition and for every good gift of God'.

Deacon: Master, bless!

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

Choir: Amen.

Clergy: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee.

Choir: O Heavenly King, / Comforter, Spirit of Truth, / Who art everywhere present, / and fillest all things, / Treasury of good things, / and Giver of life: / Come and dwell in us, / and cleanse us of all impurity, // and save our souls, O Good One.

Or, during the period from Pascha until Ascension:

Clergy: Christ is Risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and on those in the tombs bestowing life.

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Choir: and on those in the tombs bestowing life.

Reader: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. *Thrice.*

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

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, blot but our sins. O Master, pardon our iniquities. O Holy One,

visit and heal our infirmities for Thy name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. *Thrice.*

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

Our Father, Who art in the heavens, 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Priest: 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 the ages of ages.

Reader: Amen.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: 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, [*groom*], and [*bride*], 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.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: 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, [*groom*], and this Thy handmaid, [*bride*], for by Thee is a man joined to a woman. Unite them in oneness of mind, crown them in one flesh, [if appropriate - *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, crowns first the bridegroom, saying:

Priest: The servant of God, [*groom*], is crowned for the handmaid of God, [*bride*] in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Then he crowns also the bride, saying:

Priest: The handmaiden of God, [*bride*], is crowned unto the servant of God, [*groom*], in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Then the priest blesses them thrice, saying each time:

Priest: O Lord our God, crown them with glory and honour.

Deacon: Let us attend! Wisdom! Let us attend! The prokimenon in the Fourth Tone:

I will sing unto the Lord who has dealt bountifully with me and I will sing psalms unto the name of the Lord Most High.

Choir: I will sing unto the Lord who has dealt bountifully with me and I will sing psalms unto the name of the Lord Most High.

Deacon: My heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation.

Choir: I will sing unto the Lord who has dealt bountifully with me and I will sing psalms unto the name of the Lord

Most High.

Deacon: I will sing unto the Lord who has dealt bountifully with me:

Choir: and I will sing psalms unto the name of the Lord Most High.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord!

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For holy art Thou, O our God, and Thou restest in the saints, 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 every breath praise the Lord.

Choir: Let every breath praise the Lord.

Deacon: Praise ye God in His saints, praise Him in the firmament of His power.

Choir: Let every breath praise the Lord.

Deacon: Let every breath:

Choir: : praise the Lord.

Deacon: And that He will vouchsafe unto us the hearing of the Holy Gospel, let us pray to the Lord God.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Wisdom! Aright! Let us hear the Holy Gospel!

Priest: Peace be unto all!

Choir: And to thy spirit.

Priest: The reading from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke.

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

Deacon: Let us attend!

Priest: At that time, as Jesus entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

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

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, visitation, forgiveness, and good hastening for the servants of God here present, [*groom*] and [*bride*];

Choir: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: As unprofitable servants, with fear and trembling we give thanks unto Thy deep compassion, O Lord, our Saviour and Master, for Thy benefits which Thou hast spilled out abundantly upon Thy servants, [*groom*] and [*bride*], and we fall down before Thee and bring glorification unto

Thee as God. And with compunction we cry out: Do Thou deliver Thy servants from all misfortunes, and as thou art merciful, fulfil always the desires of us all as may be expedient for us, diligently we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: May this, our thanksgiving, as fragrant incense and a whole burnt-offering, be well-pleasing before the majesty of Thy glory, O All-good Master, and, as Thou art compassionate, do Thou always send the riches of Thy mercies and compassions unto Thy servants, [*groom*] and [*bride*]. And deliver them and this city and country from every assault of enemies, both visible and invisible. And grant unto them and all Thy people, a sinless and healthy length of days and success in every virtue, we pray Thee, O All-Compassionate King, mercifully hearken and quickly have mercy.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Priest Hearken unto us, O God our Saviour, Thou hope of all the ends of the earth, and of them that be far off at sea; and be merciful, be merciful, O Master, regarding our sins, and have mercy on us; for a merciful God art Thou, 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. Amen.

The choir sings the following troparia:

Choir: **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.

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, the priest says:

Priest: 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:

Priest: 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.

Then the priest says this prayer:

Choir: Amen.

Priest: 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*], 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.

Choir: Amen.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Priest: Most Holy Theotokos, save us!

Choir: More honourable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, thee who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word, the very Theotokos, thee do we magnify.

Priest: Glory to Thee, O Christ God, our hope, glory to Thee!

Choir: Glory to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy! *Three times.* Father, bless!

Priest: May He who by His presence in Cana of Galilee declared marriage to be honourable, 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 sovereigns and equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine and Helen; of the holy great martyr, Procopius; and of all the Saints: have mercy on us and save us, for He is Good and the Lover of mankind.

Choir: Amen.

Deacon: A prosperous and peaceful life, health and salvation, good hastening in all things, grant O Lord to Thy servants [*groom*] and [*bride*], and preserve them for many years!

Choir: Many years! Many years! Save them, O Christ our God!