

**THE RITE OF BLESSING OF SPOUSES
WHO HAVE BEEN LIVING WITHOUT
THE BLESSING OF THE CHURCH**

The rite is celebrated in the middle of the church. On the analoï are the Gospel and Cross. The husband stands on the right side, the wife on the left. The priest, in vestments as for the full sacrament of marriage, hands them lighted candles and begins:

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

Reader: Amen.

O heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, who art everywhere and fillest all things, Treasury of blessings and Giver of life: Come and abide in us and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (3X)

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

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us; Lord, wash away our sins; Master, pardon our transgressions; Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (3X)

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

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.

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 ages of ages.

Choir: Amen. *Then sings the Troparion of the day.*

LITANY

Priest: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For the servants of God (NM.) and for God's protection over their life together, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: That He will bring to them in their life together goodness and harmony, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: That He will grant them the remission of sins, the cleansing of iniquities, and the pardon of transgressions both voluntary and involuntary, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and each other and all our ~~lives~~ ^{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 ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

FIRST PRAYER

Priest: O Master, Lord our God, who knowest the secrets of all: as Thou forgavest the harlot Rahab and accepted the repentance of the publican, do not remember our sins which have been hidden since youth. For if Thou, O Lord, wilt be extreme to note what is done amiss, Lord, who could stand before Thee, or what flesh can be justified before Thee? Thou alone art righteous, without sin, holy, greatly merciful and most compassionate; Thou grieveest over the evil deeds of men. O Master, receive Thy servants (NN.) and unite them one to another in love, grant them the publican's conversion and the harlot's tears. Through their whole-hearted repentance, fulfilling Thy commandments in concord and peace, may they be vouchsafed Thy heavenly Kingdom. For Thou art the Creator of all, 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, Amen.

SECOND PRAYER

crowns?
penitential?
Priest: O God, our God who camest to Cana of Galilee and there blessed the wedding: Bless also these Thy servants by Thy providence who have been united in marriage. Bless their comings and their goings; increase the blessings of their lives; accept their crowns in Thy Kingdom, keeping them whole and pure and unassailed, unto ages of ages, Amen.

The Priest then blesses the married couple three times, raising his hands above their heads and each time exclaiming:

Priest: O Lord our God, crown them with glory and honor! (3X)

Let us attend. Peace be unto all.

Reader: And to your spirit.

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Prokiemenon in the eighth Tone:

Thou hast set on their heads crowns of precious stones; they asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest it them.

Choir: *Sings the Prokiemenon.*

Reader: For Thou wilt give them Thy blessing forever and ever, and wilt make them rejoice with gladness through Thy presence.

Choir: *Sings the Prokiemenon.*

Reader: Thou hast set on their heads, crowns of precious stones!

Choir: They asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest it them.

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The reading is from the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Ephesians!

Priest: Let us attend!

Reader: 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 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 everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle 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 cherishes it, even as the Lord the Church. We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself, and the wife see that she respect her husband.

Priest: Peace be unto you, reader!

Reader: And to your spirit. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Priest: The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. John.

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

Priest: Let us attend!

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. And both Jesus and his disciples were invited to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." Jesus said to her, "Woman, what have I to do with thee; my hour is not yet come." His mother said unto the servants, "Whatever he says to you, do it." And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus said unto them, "Fill the pots with water," and they filled them up to the brim. And he said unto them, "Draw out now, and serve the governor of the feast." And they served him. And when the ruler of the feast tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know whence it came (even though the servants knew) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom and said unto him, "Every man at the beginning sets forth good wine, and when men have become drunk then they serve that which is worse; but you have kept the good wine until now." This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

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

LITANY

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: O Lord Almighty, the God of our fathers, we pray Thee, harken and have mercy.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Thy great goodness, harken and have mercy.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (3X)

Priest: Again we pray for the servants of God (*NN.*) now asking for forgiveness and blessing on their marriage, for their health and salvation; we beseech Thee O Lord, harken and have mercy.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (3X)

Priest: Again we pray for the people here present in this church who await Thy great and rich mercy, for all our brethren, for all Orthodox Christians and for their health and salvation, we ask Thee, O Lord, harken and have mercy.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (3X)

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

Choir: Amen.

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: O Lord our God, who from the nations did establish Thy Church pure and unblemished, bless and save these Thy servants in humility and harmony, just as PRESERVE Thou hast blessed and saved me to this day. Fulfill all their just petitions, pour on them the compassion and abundance of Thy rich mercy and goodness. Grant them health and length of days, and prosperity in all their righteous endeavors. For Thou art a good God who lovest mankind, and unto Thee are due all glory, honor and worship to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages, Amen.

Peace be unto all!

Choir: And to your spirit.

Priest: Bow your heads unto the Lord.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

The priest, giving a blessing, says this prayer:

Priest: May the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the All-holy, Consubstantial and Life-giving Trinity, bless you (*making the sign of the cross*), and may He give you length of days, the fulfillment of life and faith, and may He grant you all earthly blessings and allow you to receive the promise of heavenly blessings, through the prayers of the All-holy Theotokos and of all the saints. Amen.

Priest: Wisdom! Most Holy Theotokos, save us!

Choir: 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!

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 ages of ages, Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (3X) Father bless!

Priest: May He who by His presence at Cana of Galilee showed marriage to be honorable, Christ our true God, through the prayers of His all-pure Mother, of the holy and glorious apostles, of Saints Constantine and Helen, of the saints whom we commemorate today (*NN.*), and of all the saints, have mercy on us and save us, for He is good and loves mankind.

Choir: Amen.