

*The Union of
London Michael
and
Jane Verónica*



*In Holy
Matrimony*

Preface

The Lord Jesus Christ taught his disciples to pray, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Consequently, the premise behind the services of the Orthodox Church is that worship on earth should, as much as possible, reflect the worship that is in heaven. Such heavenly worship is depicted for us in detail in the New Testament book of Revelation. Here the holy Apostle John is caught up to the very throne room of heaven and sees firsthand the worship offered by the heavenly host. The Orthodox Church has, throughout her history, consciously tried to emulate this celestial pattern. As a result, Orthodox worship uses:

- ✠ Liturgical prayers (Revelation 4:8, 11; 5:9–10, 12, 13; 7:12; 11:17–18; 15:3–4; 16:5) giving God’s people the means by which they might lift their voices in unison to the Creator;
- ✠ Candles or “lampstands” (Revelation 1:12, 20; 2:1; 4:5) symbolizing the fullness of God’s presence and the light of His truth;
- ✠ Vestments (Revelation 1:13; 4:4) symbolizing regeneration and the putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new man through holy baptism (see Romans 6:4–6);
- ✠ Clergy (Revelation 4:4) symbolizing the presence of God’s Kingdom and His government among us;
- ✠ Physical expressions (Revelation 4:10) of prayer—kneeling, bowing, and making the sign of the cross—symbolizing our humility and reverence; and
- ✠ Incense (Revelation 5:8; 8:3, 4) symbolizing the prayers of God’s people and the presence and blessing of Christ Himself (see Isaiah 6:4).

Through all these means, the worship of the Church has as its focus “the Lord God Almighty” (Revelation 3:8).

Holy Matrimony is a special kind of worship in the Orthodox Church—a sacrament. In it God uniquely manifests His presence as a man and a woman solemnly vow before Him, the priest, and the congregation to be true to each other for life. Christ’s blessing is commu-

nicated to the couple through His Body, the Church. God's grace is imparted to them to live together in His love, mutually fulfilling and perfecting each other, and bringing glory to His name.

The marriage ceremony itself is steeped in ritual and symbolism. Each of the acts is drawn from the Bible or the ancient Church and has special meaning and significance. Where appropriate, the meaning of these symbols is explained in the footnotes which accompany the text.

As we enter into the service of Holy Matrimony, we invite you to enter into this special time of worship and praise. Let us all beseech the Lord our God to bless His servants, Landon Michael and Jane Veronica, as they embark upon their lives together.

Processional¹

It is truly meet and right to call thee Blessed,
Lady Theotokos,² ever greatly blessed
and most perfect in innocence,
and the mother of our God.

Lady more precious than the cherubim,
and more glorious beyond all measure
than the seraphim;
that without corruption gavest birth
to God the Word.

For thou art truly Theotokos.
We magnify thee!

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1. It is customary for the people to stand when the bride enters the nave.
 2. The word Theotokos is from the Greek language and means “Mother of God.” It was adopted as a proper title for the Virgin Mary by the Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus (A.D. 431).

The Betrothal

The persons to be married come to stand before the Analogion, the man on the right hand and the woman on the left and the priest asks the following questions:

The people sit.

Priest Have you, Michael, a good, free, and unconstrained will and a firm intention to take unto yourself as wife this woman, Veronica, whom you see here before you?

Groom I have.

Priest Have you, Veronica, a good, free, and unconstrained will and a firm intention to take unto yourself as husband this man, Michael, whom you see here before you?

Bride I have.

The priest takes up one of the candles which have been placed on the Analogion, lights it and gives it to the Bridegroom, making before him the sign of the Cross as he does so. He then does the same for the Bride and begins:³

Deacon: Bless Master.

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.

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3. The bridegroom and bride are given candles which they hold throughout the service. The candles are like the lamps of the five wise maidens of the Bible, who, because they had enough oil in them, were able to receive the Bridegroom, Christ, when He came in the darkness of the night. The candles symbolize the expectation of the couple that Christ Himself will come to bless their marriage.

Choir Lord, have mercy.⁴

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

Choir Lord, have mercy.

Deacon For the peace of the whole world; for the good estate of the holy churches of God, and for the union of all men, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir Lord, have mercy.

Deacon For our father Metropolitan Saba, for the venerable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir Lord, have mercy.

Deacon For the servant of God, Michael, and for the handmaid of God, Veronica, who now promise each other their faithfulness, and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir Lord, have mercy.

Deacon That He will send down upon them perfect and peaceful love, and His help, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir Lord, have mercy.

Deacon That He will preserve them in oneness of mind, and in steadfastness of faith, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir Lord, have mercy.

4. This is one of the shortest and most profound prayers in all of Scripture. It is frequently found in the first three Gospels and in the Psalms.

Deacon That He will bless them with a blameless life, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir Lord, have mercy.

Deacon That the Lord our God will grant them an honorable marriage, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir Lord, have mercy.

Deacon For our deliverance from all tribulation, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir Lord, have mercy.

Deacon Calling to remembrance our all-holy, immaculate, 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 ages of ages.

Choir Amen.

Deacon Let us pray to the Lord

Choir Lord, have mercy.

Priest O eternal God, Who has brought into unity those who were sundered, and has ordained for them an indissoluble bond of love; Who blessed Isaac and Rebecca, and made them heirs of Thy promise: Bless also these Thy servants, Michael and Veronica, guiding them unto every good work. For Thou art a merciful God, Who loves 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.

Choir Amen.

Priest Peace be to all.

Choir And to thy spirit.

Deacon Let us bow our heads unto the Lord.

Choir To Thee, O Lord.

Priest O Lord our God, Who has espoused the Church as a pure Virgin from among the Gentiles: Bless this Betrothal, and unite and preserve 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.

Choir Amen.

Then the priest takes the ring of the Bride, and blesses the Groom, making with it the sign of the Cross over him three times, touching the head of the Bride with it each time, and saying:⁵

Priest The servant of God, Michael, is betrothed to the handmaid of God, Veronica, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The priest then places the ring on the fourth finger of the right hand of the Groom. Then the priest takes the ring of the Groom, and blesses the Bride, making with it the sign of the Cross over her three times, touching the head of the Groom with it each time; and saying:

5. The rings have been a symbol of betrothal from the most ancient times. The exchange signifies that in married life the weakness of one partner will be compensated for by the strength of the other, the imperfections of the one by the perfection of the other. By themselves, the newly betrothed are incomplete; together they are made perfect. Thus the exchange of rings gives expression to the fact that the spouses in marriage will constantly be complimenting each other. Each will be enriched by the union.

Priest The handmaid of God, Veronica, is betrothed to the servant of God, Michael, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The priest places the ring on the fourth finger of the right hand of the Bride. The bridal pair then exchange the rings; meanwhile the priest says the following prayer:

Deacon Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir Lord, have mercy.

Priest O Lord our God, bless the betrothal of the Thy servants, Michael and Veronica, and confirm the word which they have spoken. Establish them in the holy union which is from Thee. For Thou, in the beginning, made them male and female, and by Thee is the woman joined unto the man as a help meet. Wherefore, O Lord our God, Who has sent forth Thy truth upon Thine inheritance, and Thy covenant unto Thy servants our fathers, even Thine elect, from generation to generation: Look Thou upon Thy servant, Michael, and upon Thy handmaid, Veronica, and establish their betrothal in faith and in oneness of mind, in truth, and in love. And, O Lord our God, do Thou now bless this putting-on of rings with Thy heavenly benediction: and let Thine Angel go before them all the days of their life:

For Thou art He Who blesses and sanctifies all things, and unto Thee do we ascribe 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 Marriage

(The Order of Crowning)

The people stand.

The priest shall take the censer and cense around the Analogion, the bridal pair, and all present, while Psalm 128 is sung:

Priest Blessed are all they that fear the Lord: and walk in His ways.

Choir Glory to Thee, our God; glory to Thee.

Priest You shall eat of the fruit of your labors: O blessed are you, and happy shall you be.

Choir Glory to Thee, our God; glory to Thee.

Priest Your wife shall be as a fruitful vine upon the walls of your house: your children like a newly-planted olive-orchard around your table.

Choir Glory to Thee, our God; glory to Thee.

Priest Lo, thus shall the man be blessed that fears the Lord: The Lord in Zion shall so bless you, that you shall see the good things of Jerusalem all the days of your life.

Choir Glory to Thee, our God; glory to Thee.

Priest Yes, that you shall see your children's children, and peace upon Israel.

Choir Glory to Thee, our God; glory to Thee.

The priest makes the sign of the Cross above the Analogion with the censer and the deacon says:

Deacon Bless Master.

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.

The people sit.

Deacon In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Choir Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir Lord, have mercy.

Deacon For our father Metropolitan Saba, for the venerable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir Lord, have mercy.

Deacon Calling to remembrance our all-holy, immaculate, 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 ages of ages.

Choir Amen.

The First Prayer of the Crowning

Deacon Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir Lord, have mercy.

Priest O God most pure, Author of all creation, Who through Thy love for mankind transformed a rib of Adam our forefather into a woman, and blessed them and said, “Increase and multiply, and have dominion over the earth;” and declared the two to be one flesh, for because of this a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and the two become one flesh; and what God has joined together let no man put asunder; Who also blessed Thy servant Abraham, and by opening the womb of Sarah, made him the father of many nations; Who gave Isaac to Rebecca, and blessed her offspring; Who joined Jacob and Rachel, and from them brought forth the twelve Patriarchs; Who united Joseph and Asenath, and as the fruit of procreation gave them Ephraim and Manasseh; Who accepted Zacharias and Elizabeth, and declared their offspring to be the Forerunner; Who from the root of Jesse, according to the flesh caused the Ever-Virgin Mary to bud forth, and from her Thou Thyself were incarnate—born for the salvation of the human

race; Who through Thine unspeakable grace and magnified goodness were present in Cana of Galilee, and blessed the marriage there, that Thou might show that lawful marriage and procreation are according to Thy will; O most holy Master, accept the prayer of Thy servants; and as Thou were present there, be present also here with Thy invisible protection.

Bless this marriage and grant to these Thy servants Michael and Veronica, a peaceful life, length of days, chastity, love for one another in the bond of peace, long-lived offspring, gratitude from their children, and a crown of glory that does not fade away. Account them worthy to see their children's children. Keep their marriage bed safe against every hostile scheme; give them of the dew of heaven from on high, and of the fatness of the earth. Fill their houses with bountiful food and with every good thing so that they may give in turn to those in need, bestowing also on them that are here assembled with us all their supplications that are unto salvation.

For Thou art a God of mercy and of bounty and of love toward mankind, and we send up glory to Thee, together with Thy eternal Father and Thy most Holy, Good, and Life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Choir Amen.

The Second Prayer of the Crowning

Deacon Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir Lord, have mercy

Priest Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, the Priest of mystical and pure marriage, and the Ordainer of the law of the marriage of the body, the Preserver of immortality, and the

Provider of good things; do Thou the same Master, Who in the beginning made man and set him to be a King over Thy creation, and said: “It is not good for man to be alone on the earth; let Us make a help meet for him”; and fashioned Woman, which when Adam beheld, he said: “This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman; for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and the two shall be one flesh; and those whom 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, Michael and Veronica; and grant that this Thy handmaid may, in all things, be pleasing unto her husband; and that this Thy servant may love and cherish his wife; that they may live according to Thy will.

Bless them, O Lord our God, as Thou blessed Abraham and Sarah; Bless them, O Lord our God, as Thou blessed Isaac and Rebecca: Bless them, O Lord our God, as Thou blessed Joachim and Anna: Bless them, O Lord our God, as Thou blessed Zacharias and Elizabeth: Preserve them, O Lord our God, as Thou preserved Noah in the Ark: Preserve them, O Lord our God, as Thou preserved the three Holy Children from the fire; and let that gladness come upon them which the blessed Helena had when she found the precious Cross.

Remember them, O Lord our God, as Thou remembered 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 attendants of the bridal pair, who share in this joy; remember, O Lord our God, Thy servant Michael and Thy handmaid Veronica, and bless them. Grant them fair children, and concord of soul

and body; exalt them like the cedars of Lebanon, like a luxuriant vine, that, having sufficiency in all things they may abound in every work that is good and acceptable unto Thee. And let them behold their children's children around their table, like a newly-planted olive orchard, that, obtaining favor in Thy sight, they may shine like the stars of heaven, in Thee, our Lord and God:

For unto Thee are due all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father, Who is from everlasting, and to the Son, and to Thy Life-giving Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir Amen.

The Third Prayer of the Crowning

Deacon Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir Lord, have mercy.

Priest O holy God, Who created man out of the dust and fashioned his wife and joined her unto him as a helpmeet, for it seemed good to Thy majesty that man should not be alone upon the earth: Do Thou, the same Lord, extend Thy hand from Thy holy dwelling place, and join this Thy servant Michael, and this Thy handmaid Veronica, for by Thee is the husband united unto the wife.⁶ Unite them in one mind and one flesh, and grant unto them fair children for education in Thy faith and fear:

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.

Choir Amen.

6. The right hands of the couple are now joined together and kept joined throughout the service to symbolize the oneness of the couple.

The Crowning

The priest takes up one of the wedding crowns and makes with it the sign of the Cross, three times, over the head of the Bridegroom, and touches the head of the Bride each time, saying:⁷

Priest The servant of God, Michael, is crowned unto the handmaid of God, Veronica, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Choir Amen.

The priest places the Bridegroom's crown upon his head, then he takes up the other crown and makes with it the sign of the Cross, three times, over the head of the Bride and touches the head of the Bridegroom with it each time, saying:

Priest The handmaid of God, Veronica, is crowned unto the servant of God, Michael, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Choir Amen.

The priest takes the Bridegroom's crown in his right hand, and the Bride's crown in his left, and exchanges them three times, saying:

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

The Prokeimenon

Deacon Let us attend!

Chanter Thou hast set upon their heads crowns of precious stones:
They asked life of Thee, and Thou gave it to them.

7. The office of crowning is the apex of the wedding service. The crowns are signs of glory and honor with which God crowns the bridal pair during the sacrament. The groom and the bride are crowned as the king and queen of their own little kingdom, the home, which they rule with wisdom, justice, and integrity. The crowns in the Orthodox wedding ceremony refer also to crowns of martyrdom since every true marriage involves immeasurable self-sacrifice on both sides.

Choir Thou hast set upon their heads crowns of precious stones:
They asked life of Thee, and Thou gave it to them.

Chanter For Thou will give them Thy blessing forever and ever:
Thou will make them to rejoice with gladness through Thy
presence.

Choir Thou hast set upon their heads crowns of precious stones:
They asked life of Thee, and Thou gave it to them.

Chanter Thou hast set upon their heads crowns of precious stones:

Choir They asked life of Thee, and Thou gave it to them.

The Epistle

Deacon Wisdom!

Reader The Lesson from the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the
Ephesians:

Deacon Let us attend!

While the Epistle is being read, the priest censens around the Holy Altar, the sanctuary, and the clergy who stand there in the accustomed manner.

Reader Always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also 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 He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no

one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband. (Eph. 5:20–33)

Priest Peace be to you who reads.

Choir Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Chanter The words of the Lord are pure words as silver tried in a furnace.

Choir Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Chanter Thou, O Lord, will protect and preserve us from this generation forever.

Choir Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The Gospel

The people stand.

The priest comes before the Altar, facing the people, with the Gospel Book before him, and says aloud:

Deacon Wisdom! Attend! Let us hear the Holy Gospel.

Priest Peace be to all.

Choir And to thy spirit.

Priest The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John.

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

Deacon Let us attend.

Priest And on the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; and Jesus also was

invited, and His disciples, to the wedding. And when the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.” And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what do I have to do with you? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.” Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each. Jesus said to them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, “Draw some out now, and take it to the headwaiter.” And they took it to him. And when the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom, and said to him, “Every man serves the good wine first, and when men have drunk freely, then that which is poorer; you have kept the good wine until now.” This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him. After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother, and His brothers, and His disciples; and there they stayed a few days.
(John 2:1–12)

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

The bridal couple venerate the Gospel Book and the priest places it on the Analogion.

The people sit.

A homily may be given by the priest, then the following litany is prayed:

*The Litany
of Fervent Supplication*

The people stand.

Deacon 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 upon 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, and visitation for the servants of God, Michael and Veronica, their parents, their attendants, and all here present.

Choir Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

Priest O Lord our God, Who in Thy saving providence did 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, Michael and Veronica, and grant them to lead an upright and blameless life even unto a ripe old age, walking in Thy commandments with a pure heart:

For Thou art a merciful God Who loves 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.

Choir Amen.

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

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:

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.

The Common Cup

Then the priest says the following prayer of blessing of the Common Cup:

Priest Peace be to all.

Choir And to thy spirit.

Priest Let us bow our heads unto the Lord.

Choir To Thee, O Lord.

Deacon Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir Lord, have mercy.

Priest O God, Who created all things by Thy might, and made fast the round world, and adorned the crown of all things which Thou made: Bless now, with Thy spiritual blessing, this Common Cup, which Thou dost give to those who are now united in 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.

Choir Amen.

The priest gives the newly-wedded pair to drink of the cup,⁸ three times each in turn, in token of their common life together.

8. The Gospel lesson, which was read earlier, recounts the marriage at Cana of Galilee which was attended and blessed by Christ and for which He reserved His first miracle. There He converted the water into wine and gave it to the newlyweds. In remembrance of this blessing, wine is now given to the couple. This is the “common cup” of life denoting the mutual sharing of joy and sorrow, the token of a life of harmony. The drinking of wine from the common cup serves to impress upon the couple from that moment on they will share everything in life, joys as well as

*The Wedding Dance*⁹

The people sit.

The Bridegroom and the Bride, followed by their attendants, walk three times around the Analogion. The priest precedes them, censing as he goes. Meanwhile, the following hymns are sung:

Choir O Isaiah, dance thy joy: for a Virgin was with child and hast borne a son, Emmanuel, both God and man: and Orient is His name; whom magnifying we call the Virgin blessed.

O holy martyrs, who fought the good fight and have received your crowns: entreat ye the Lord our God to have mercy on our souls.

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

Reception of the Crowns

Then the priest removes their crowns saying:

sorrows, “bearing one another’s burdens.” Their joys will be doubled and their sorrows halved because they will be shared.

9. In this ceremonial walk, the husband and wife take their first steps as a married couple, and the Church, in the person of the priest, leads them in the way they must walk. The way is symbolized by the circle at the center of which are the Gospel and the cross of the Lord. This expresses the fact that Christian living is a perfect orbit around the center of life, which is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ. During the walk around the table a hymn is sung to the holy martyrs reminding the newly married couple of the sacrificial love they are to have for each other in marriage—a love that seeks not its own but is willing to sacrifice its all for the one loved.

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

And you, O bride: Be exalted like unto Sarah; and exult like unto Rebecca; and multiply like unto Rachael: and rejoice in your husband, fulfilling the conditions of the law: for so is it well-pleasing unto God.

Deacon Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir Lord, have mercy.

Priest O God, our God, Who came to Cana of Galilee, and blessed there the marriage feast: Bless, also, these Thy servants, who through Thy good providence are now united together in wedlock. Bless their goings out and their comings in: replenish their life with good things: receive their crowns into Thy Kingdom, preserving them spotless, blameless, and without reproach, unto ages of ages. Amen.

Holding the blessing cross, the priest then bestows the Nuptial Blessing upon the newly-married pair, saying:

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 unto you length of days, fair children, prosperity of life, and faith: and fill you with abundance of all earthly good things, and make you worthy to obtain the blessings of the promise: through the prayers of the Holy Theotokos, and of all the Saints. Amen.

The newly-married pair kiss the Cross and each other, and the Priest says the Dismissal Prayer:

The Dismissal

- 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. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
Father, bless.
- Priest** May He Who by His presence at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee did declare marriage to be an honorable estate, Christ our true God; through the prayers of His all-holy Mother; of the holy, glorious, and all-laudable Apostles; of the holy, God-crowned Kings and Saints-equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine and Helena: of the holy Great Martyr Procopius; and of all the Saints, have mercy upon you and save you: forasmuch as He is good and loves mankind.
- Choir** Amen.
- Priest** Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us.
- Choir** Amen.

Recessional

God grant you many years.
God grant you many years.
God grant you many, many, many years.

Blessed are all who fear the Lord,
 who walk 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 shall be like a fruitful vine
 within your house.
Your children will be like olive shoots
 around your table.
Thus shall the man be blest
 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.

Bridal Party

Mother of Bride

Varvara Rudenko

Father of Bride

Ruslan Rudenko

Mother of Groom

Patricia Rogge

Father of Groom

Louis Rogge

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Did He not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.

- Mal 2:15 (ESV)