

The Form of
**SOLEMNIZATION
OF MATRIMONY**

From The Book of Common Prayer

Look through this leaflet as you wait for the service to begin. It will explain the service to you and show you how to take your part in it.

When you have been seated, kneel and say a prayer as you would before any other service of the Church. Include a prayer for the bride and groom.

When the wedding procession begins, you RISE — and REMAIN STANDING throughout the service.

The first part of the service, called the Betrothal, is said at the Chancel steps.

In the first paragraph the minister addresses the congregation:

Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this company, to join together this Man and this Woman in holy Matrimony; which is an honourable estate, instituted of God, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church: which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence and first miracle that he wrought in Cana of Galilee, and is commended of Saint Paul to be honourable among all men: and therefore is not by any to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God. Into this holy estate these two persons present come now to be joined. If any man can show just cause, why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace.

The next paragraph is addressed to the bride and groom:

I require and charge you both, as ye will answer at the dreadful day of judgment when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, that if either of you know any impediment, why ye may not be lawfully joined together in Matrimony, ye do now confess it. For be ye well assured, that if any persons are joined together otherwise than as God's Word doth allow, their marriage is not lawful.

These two foregoing paragraphs are known as the "Cautions," which express the sacredness in which the Church holds Holy Matrimony and the safeguards with which she surrounds it.

The minister then speaks to the groom, calling him by name:

N. Wilt thou have this Woman to thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour, and keep her in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?

The groom answers:

I will.

The same question is then asked the bride:

N. Wilt thou have this Man to thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony? Wilt thou love him, comfort him, honour, and keep him in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?

And she answers:

I will.

Speaking to the bride's father, or some one acting for him, the minister asks:

Who giveth this Woman to be married to this Man?

The father places the bride's right hand in the minister's hand, and he, in turn, gives her hand to the groom.

The bride's father, having committed his daughter to the Church, goes to the family pew. This is the end of the Betrothal.

The minister, bride, groom, best man, and maid of honor now go to the altar.

At the altar, the groom takes the bride's right hand and repeats his marriage vow:

I N. take thee N. to my wedded 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 ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth.

They loose their hands, and the bride takes the groom's right hand, repeating her marriage vow:

I N. take thee N. to my wedded 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 ordinance; and thereto I give thee my troth.

The minister may then bless the ring, with this prayer:

Bless, O Lord, this Ring, that he who gives it and she who wears it may abide in thy peace, and continue in thy favour, unto their life's end; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The groom places the ring on the fourth finger of the bride's left hand and says:

With this Ring I thee wed; In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*

The congregation joins in saying the Lord's Prayer:

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, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The minister says this prayer of blessing upon the pair who have now contracted a marriage with each other:

O Eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Giver of all spiritual grace, the Author of everlasting life; Send thy blessing upon these thy servants, this man and this woman, whom we bless in thy Name; that they, living faithfully together, may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant betwixt them made, (whereof this Ring given and received is a token and pledge,) and may ever remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according to thy laws; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Two more prayers are provided, one for children and one for the home. These prayers are optional.

For children:

O Almighty God, Creator of mankind, who only art the

**When a double ring ceremony is desired, the second ring is customarily blessed and placed on the groom's finger following the placing on the bride's finger.*

well-spring of life; Bestow upon these thy servants, if it be thy will, the gift and heritage of children; and grant that they may see their children brought up in thy faith and fear, to the honour and glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For the home:

O God, who hast so consecrated that state of Matrimony that in it is represented the spiritual marriage and unity betwixt Christ and his Church; Look mercifully upon these thy servants, that they may love, honour, and cherish each other, and so live together in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and of peace; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit ever, one God, world without end.
Amen.

The minister then joins the bride's and groom's right hands and says:

Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder.

The minister then makes the following proclamation of the marriage:

Forasmuch as N. and N. have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have given and pledged their troth, each to the other, and have declared the same by giving and receiving a Ring, and by joining hands; I pronounce that they are Man and Wife, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

The bride and groom (only) kneel for the blessing:

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, bless, preserve, and keep you; the Lord mercifully with his favour look upon you, and fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace; that ye may so live together in this life, that in the world to come ye may have life everlasting.
Amen.

The congregation remains standing while the bridal party leaves the church.

