

Form for the Solemnisation of Marriage

Classic Form

N. and N. you have desired that your marriage bond be publicly confirmed in the Name of God.

Whereas no legal impediment has been put forward, we shall now proceed thereto.

First however, you should hear from the Word of God how honourable the state of marriage is and that it is an institution of God which is well pleasing to Him. For this cause He also promised to bless and help those joined in matrimony, while He would mete out judgement and punishment to those living in adultery.

In the first place you should know that God our Father, after He had created heaven and earth and all that is in them, made man in His own image and likeness. And, after He had created man He said: "It is not good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him.... Then the Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, He took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the flesh. He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him. Then the man said, 'At last, here is one of my own kind - Bone taken from my bone, and flesh from my flesh. "Woman" is her name because she was taken out of man.' That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one.... So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female, blessed them, and said, 'Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals.'"

The apostle Paul speaks of this institution of God as a great mystery with regard to Christ and the church. You should therefore not doubt but that the state of marriage is pleasing to God, since He made for Adam his wife, brought and gave her Himself to him to be his wife, thereby indicating that He does to this day as with His hand bring to every man his wife. For this reason also the Lord Jesus Christ accorded marriage high honour by His presence, gifts and first sign in the town of Cana in Galilee to show thereby that this holy state should be held in honour by all.

Though they who are joined in marriage are also, usually, subject to all manner of misfortune and affliction through the fact of sin, you nevertheless may be assured in your hearts of the certain help of God and live in confident trust that He will ever grant you His support, even when you might least expect it.

Secondly, in order that you may lead a god fearing life in this state, you should also know with what object God instituted marriage. It is necessary that each faithfully help the other in all things pertaining to this life and to life eternal.

Furthermore, it is through marriage that the human race shall be procreated and the parents are bound to raise their children in the true knowledge and fear of God, to His glory and to their salvation. Thus the gospel admonishes us to honour this holy state as an institution not rooted in the wisdom of man but in the will of God, our Creator. We should furthermore live together in this state in holy devotion to God, that the temple of God which is our body, shall not be defiled; for whosoever defileth the temple of God, him shall God destroy.

Thirdly, you are to know your respective duties towards one another according to the Word of God.

You, bridegroom, as the man must know that God has set you to be the head of your wife, so that according to your ability you may guide her with discretion, instructing, comforting and protecting her as the head rules the body and as Christ is the Head, Wisdom, Consolation and Support of His church. You are moreover to love your wife as your own body even as Christ loves His church. You should harbour no bitterness towards her, but dwell with her in all wisdom. You must show honour to your wife as the weaker vessel, mindful that you are heirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers be not impeded. And since it is God's command "that the man shall eat his bread in the sweat of his brow", you are to labour faithfully and diligently in the calling in which God has placed you, so that you may maintain your family with God and with honour and also have sufficient to give to those who are in need.

In the same way should you, the bride, know how you are to conduct yourself towards your husband according to the Word of God. You shall love and honour your husband, granting him obedience in all things just and fair, as the body is obedient to the head and the church to Christ. You must not rule over your husband. For Adam was first created and then Eve to be a help to him. And after the fall God said to Eve and in her to all women, "you will still have desire for your husband, yet you will be subject to him".

You shall not withstand this ordinance of God but rather render obedience to the command of God and follow the example of godly women who fastened their hope in God and were subject to their own husband as Sarai was obedient to her husband. You shall also be a help to your husband in all things

good and proper, as well as diligently care for your household. Live modestly and virtuously, without worldly splendour, so that you may be to others an example of virtue.

The minister of the Word shall now ask the bridal couple:

N. and N., having now understood that God has instituted marriage and what things He commands you therein, do you here declare before all who are present here, that it is your earnest purpose thus to live in this holy state and do you desire your marriage to be confirmed?

Answer: Yes.

Minister speaks to the bridegroom

A.B., do you declare that within your knowledge there is no legal impediment to your proposed marriage to C.D., present here, and that you call all those present here to witness that you take C.D. as your lawful wife?

Answer: Yes.

Minister speaks to the bride

C.D., do you declare that within your knowledge there is no legal impediment to your proposed marriage to A.B. present here, and that you call all those present here to witness that you take A.B. as your lawful husband?

Answer: Yes.

Whereupon the minister shall say to the couple:

May the Lord our God confirm the purpose which He has given you and may the beginning of your marriage be in the Name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.

Hereupon the minister, having requested them to give each other the right hand, speaks first to the bridegroom:

A.B., you have declared here before God and all people present that you take C.D. to be your lawful wife. Do you promise never to forsake her, to love her and maintain her faithfully as a devoted and god fearing husband is bound to do to his lawful wife? Do you promise also to live with her in devotion to God and to remain faithful to her in all things according to the precepts of the Holy Gospel?

Answer: I do.

Thereupon to the Bride:

C.D., you have declared here before God and all people present that you take A. B. to be your lawful husband. Do you promise to love him, to render obedience to him, to serve and to help him and never to forsake him? Do you promise also to live with him in devotion to God and to remain faithful to him in all things, as a god fearing and faithful wife is bound to do towards her lawful husband according to the precepts of the Holy Gospel?

Answer: I do.

Then the minister shall say:

I declare A.B. and C.D. lawfully married. May the Father of all mercies, who of His grace has called you to this holy state of marriage, unite you in true love and faithfulness and grant you His blessing. Amen. Hear now from the gospel in the words of Matthew how strong the bond of marriage is. Some Pharisees came to him and tried to trap him by asking, "'Does our Law allow a man to divorce his wife for any reason he wishes?' Jesus answered, 'Haven't you read the scripture that says that in the beginning the Creator made people male and female?' And God said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife, and the two will become one.' So they are no longer two, but one. Man must not separate, then, what God has joined together. The Pharisees asked him, 'Why, then, did Moses give the law for a man to hand his wife a divorce notice and send her away?' Jesus answered, 'Moses gave you permission to divorce your wives because you are so hard to teach. But it was not this way at the time of creation. I tell you, then, that any man who divorces his wife, even though she has not been unfaithful, commits adultery if he marries some other woman.'"

Accept these words of Christ and be assured that our Lord God has joined you together in this holy state. You should therefore receive whatever befalls you therein with patience and thanksgiving, because nothing in our lives happens outside of the will of God. Thus all things will turn to your advantage and salvation.

Prayer:

But because we of ourselves possess nothing of any worth and all good gifts descend from above, from the Father of Light, therefore I ask you to kneel down before the countenance of God, that the congregation may pray with you and for you:

Almighty God, who show Your wisdom and goodness in all Your works and ordinances, and have from the beginning declared that it is not good that man should be alone, and therefore have created a help for him, and ordained that they who were two should be one, we pray You, whereas You have called this couple to the holy state of marriage and united them therein, You would give them Your

Holy Spirit, so that they, in true and steadfast faith, may, according to Your divine will, live in holiness and withstand all wickedness.

Bless them as You blessed our faithful fathers, Your loyal friends, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Grant unto them Your grace so that they, as joint heirs of the covenant which You established with those fathers, may bring up the children it may please You to give them, in all godliness to the glory of Your Holy Name, to the edification of Your church, and to the extension of Your Holy Gospel. Hear us, Father of mercies, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, our Lord, who, with You and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one true, eternal God, to be praised for ever. Amen.

In conclusion the minister says:

The Lord, our gracious God, replenish you with His grace, and grant that you may long live together in all godliness and holiness. Amen.