

A PSALM PRAISING MARRIAGE

Psalm 127

Priest: Blessed are all those who fear the Lord and who walk in His ways.

Chanter: Glory to You, our God, glory to You.

Priest: You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands.

Chanter: Glory to You, our God, glory to You.

Priest: Blessed are you, and it shall be well with you.

Chanter: Glory to You, our God, glory to You.

Priest: Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine along the sides of your house.

Chanter: Glory to You, our God, glory to You.

Priest: Your children shall be like newly planted olive trees around your table.

Chanter: Glory to You, our God, glory to You.

Priest: Behold! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord.

Chanter: Glory to You, our God, glory to You.

Priest: May the Lord bless you out of Zion; may you see the good things of Jerusalem all the days of your life.

Chanter: Glory to You, our God, glory to You.

Priest: Yea! May you live to see your children's children, and peace upon Israel.

Chanter: Glory to You, our God, glory to You.

During the singing of the above psalm, the priest lights two candles, symbolic of the light of Christ, and then gives them to the bride and groom to hold.

THE SERVICE OF CROWNING

Turning east and facing the altar, the priest raises the Gospel book and says:

Priest: Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

Chanter: Amen.

*During the Easter season "**Christ is risen**" is sung three times.*

The Petitions

Priest: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For the peace of God and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For peace in the whole world, for the stability of the holy Churches of God and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy.

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

Chanter: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For our Archbishop (*Name*), the honorable presbyters, the deacons in the service of Christ; for all the clergy and the laity, let us pray to the Lord.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For the servants of God (*Name*) and (*Name*), who are now being united to one another in the communion of marriage, and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For the servant of God (*Name*) and the servant of God (*Name*), that their marriage may be blessed as was that of Cana in Galilee, let us pray to the Lord.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: That there may be given to them soberness of life and children as may be best for them, let us pray to the Lord.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: That they may rejoice in the beholding of their sons and daughters, let us pray to the Lord.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: That there may be granted to them the happiness of many children, and a course of life together blameless and unashamed, let us pray to the Lord.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: That there may be granted to them and to us, all of our prayers that are for salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: That both they and we may be delivered from all affliction, wrath, danger and distress, let us pray to the Lord.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Help us; save us; have mercy on us and protect us, O God by Your grace.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Remembering our most holy, pure, blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.

Chanter: To You, O Lord.

Priest: For to You belongs all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

Chanter: Amen.

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy.

The First Prayer to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Priest: O God most pure, the Author of all creation, in Your loving kindness You transformed a rib of Adam the forefather into a woman and blessed them and said, "Increase and multiply, and have dominion over the earth." By joining them together, You declared them both to be one. "For this reason a man shall leave his 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." You also blessed Your servant Abraham, and opened the womb of Sara, and made him the father of many nations; You gave Rebecca to Issac, and blessed her offspring; You joined Jacob and Rachel, and from them brought forth the twelve patriarchs of ancient Israel; You joined Joseph and Asenath, and as the fruit of their childbearing, You bestowed upon them Ephraim and Manasseh; You blessed Zachariah and Elizabeth, and declared their son, John the Baptist, to be the Forerunner of the Messiah: out of the root of Jesse, according to the flesh, You produced the ever-virgin Mary, and from her You were born, becoming incarnate for the salvation of the human race. In Your infinite grace and amazing goodness You were present in Cana of Galilee and blessed the marriage that took place there, that You might show that a lawful union, and children from it, is in accordance with Your will. Most-holy Master, accept the prayer of Your servants and as You were present at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, be present among us now, granting all of us Your unseen protection. Bless this marriage and grant unto these Your servants (*Name*) and (*Name*) a peaceful life, length of days, chastity, love for one another in a bond of peace, long-lived children, the joy of grateful children, and a crown of glory that will never fade away. Make them worthy to live to see their children's children. Keep their marriage bond undefiled. Give them of the dew from the heavens above and the richness of the earth. Fill their home with bountiful food, and with every good thing, that they may have enough to share with those who are poor and in need. Grant to all those who are present here this day, all of their prayers that are for salvation.

For You, O Christ, are a God of mercy, compassion and love, and to You do we offer up glory: together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

Chanter: Amen.

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord.

Chanter: Lord have mercy.

The Second Prayer to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Priest: Blessed are You, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, for You are the holy Celebrant of mystical and pure marriage, the Guardian of incorruption, the Lawgiver of the body and the kindly Steward of the means of life: Master, in the beginning You created man and appointed him to be the king of creation. But then You said, "It is not good for man to be alone upon the earth; let Us make a helpmate for him." Taking one of his ribs, You made woman, whom when Adam saw her, he said, "This is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, for she was taken out of her man. For this reason shall a man forsake his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and the two shall be one flesh" and "those whom God has joined together, let no man put asunder." And now, Lord and Master, our God, send down Your heavenly grace upon these Your servants, *(Name)* and *(Name)*, and grant unto this woman and this man that they live according to Your will in all things.

Bless them, O Lord our God, as you blessed Abraham and Sarah.

Bless them, O Lord our God, as You blessed Isaac and Rebecca.

Bless them, O Lord our God, as you blessed Jacob and all the Patriarchs.

Bless them, O Lord our God, as You blessed Joseph and Asenath.

Bless them, O Lord our God, as You blessed Moses and Zipporah

Bless them, O Lord our God, as You blessed Joachim and Anna.

Bless them, O Lord our God, as You blessed Zachariah and Elizabeth.

Protect them, O Lord our God, as You protected Noah in the ark.

Protect them, O Lord our God, as You protected Jonah in the belly of the whale.

Protect them, O Lord our God, as You protected the holy three young men from the fire of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, when You sent down upon them dew from the heavens.

May that joy come upon them which the blessed Helen had when she found the precious Cross of Christ in Jerusalem.

Remember them, O Lord our God, as You remembered Enoch, Shem, and Elijah.

Remember them, O Lord our God, as You remembered Your holy forty martyrs of Sevastea, sending down upon them crowns of victory from Heaven.

Remember them, O Lord our God, and the parents who raised them, for it is the prayers of their parents that will strengthen the foundation of their home.

Remember, O Lord our God, the wedding company that has here come together to be present at this joyous celebration.

Remember, O Lord our God, Your servant (*Name*) and Your servant (*Name*), and bless them. Grant unto them a fruitful union, fair children, concord of soul and body. Exalt them like the cedars of Lebanon, like a well-cultured and fruitful vine. Grant them a rich store of sustenance, so that having all the necessities of life, they may abound in every charitable work that is good and pleasing in Your sight. May they live to see their children's children as newly planted olive trees round about their table; and, being pleasing in Your sight, may they shine like the stars in the heavens, in You, our Lord, to Whom are due all glory, honor, and worship together with Your eternal Father, and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

Chanter: Amen.

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord.

Chanter: Lord have mercy.

The Joining of Hands

Holy God, You fashioned man from the dust of the earth, and from his rib You fashioned woman, and joined her to him as a helpmate, for it seemed good to Your Majesty that man should not be alone upon the earth. Master, stretch forth Your hand from Your holy dwelling place, and join together this Your servant (*Name*) and Your servant (*Name*), (*At this point, the priest joins together the right hands of the bride and groom.*) for it is by You that a wife is joined to her husband. Unite them in oneness of mind and heart; crown them with wedlock into one flesh; grant to them a fruitful union, and the delight of good children.

For Yours is the dominion, and Yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

Chanter: Amen.

The Blessing and Crowning of the Bride and Groom

The priest, taking up the crowns, first crowns the groom, saying three times:

The servant of God (*Name*) is crowned to the servant of God, (*Name*), in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Chanter: Amen.

And he then crowns the bride, saying three times:

The servant of God (*Name*) is crowned to the servant of God (*Name*), in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Chanter: Amen.

Placing the crowns on the heads of the bride and groom the priest sings the following verse from the Book of Psalms three times:

Priest: O Lord, our God, crown them with glory and honor (Psalm 8:6).

The sponsor then exchanges the crowns three times, in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Epistle Reading

Priest: Let us listen attentively.

Reader: You have set crowns of precious stones upon their heads. They asked life of You and You gave it to them (Psalm 21:3-4).

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from the Letter of the holy apostle Paul to the Ephesians (5:20-33).

Priest: Let us listen attentively.

Reader: Brethren, give thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the Church, the body of

which He is the Savior. Just as the Church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be in everything to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her, in order to make her holy with the washing of water by the Word, so as to present the Church to Himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind – yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the Church, because we are members of His body. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh."

This is a great mystery and I am applying it to Christ and the Church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

Priest: Peace be with you, the reader.

Reader: And with your spirit.

Chanter: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

O Lord, You shall keep us and You shall preserve us from this generation forth and forever (*Psalms 12:8*).

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The Lord is righteous and loves good deeds: those who do them will live in His presence (*Psalms 11:7*).

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The Gospel Reading

The congregation stands for the reading of the Gospel.

Priest: Wisdom! Arise! Let us hear the Holy Gospel. Peace be to all.

Chanter: And with your spirit.

Priest: The reading is from the holy Gospel according to St. John (John 2:1 -11). Let us listen attentively.

Chanter: Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

Priest: At that time there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and His disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Now six stone jars were standing there, for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast." So they took it. When the steward of the feast tasted the water that had now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine until now." This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee; He made known His glory and His disciples believed in Him.

Chanter: Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

The Petitions for Mercy and Salvation

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

Chanter: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Priest: O Lord Almighty, the God of our fathers, we pray to You, hear us and have mercy.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Have mercy on us, O God, in accordance with Your steadfast love, we beg You, hear us and have mercy.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health and salvation for the servants of God, *(Name)* and *(Name)*, and for all the people present here who await the riches of Your mercy.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For You are a merciful and loving God, and to You do we offer glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

Chanter: Amen.

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy.

A Prayer to our Lord Jesus Christ for Marital Faithfulness

Priest: Lord Jesus Christ our God, in the plan of Your salvation, You declared that marriage is to be honored by Your presence at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. Preserve in peace and harmony these Your servants (*Name*) and (*Name*), whom You are pleased to have united to one another this day. Bring honor to their marriage. Preserve their marriage bed undefiled. Grant that their life together may be without stain or sin. And account them worthy of living to a ripe old age, keeping Your commandments in purity of heart.

For You are our God, the God who has mercy and who saves us, and to You do we give glory, together with Your eternal Father, and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

Chanter: Amen.

The Litany of Supplication

Priest: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and protect us, O God, by Your grace.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For this whole day, that it may be perfect, holy, peaceful, and sinless; let us ask of the Lord.

Chanter: Grant this, O Lord.

Priest: For an angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies; let us ask of the Lord.

Chanter: Grant this, O Lord.

Priest: For the forgiveness and remission of our sins and transgressions; let us ask of the Lord.

Chanter: Grant this, O Lord.

Priest: For all that is good and profitable for our souls, and for peace in the world; let us ask of the Lord.

Chanter: Grant this, O Lord.

Priest: That we may complete the remaining time of our life in peace and repentance; let us ask of the Lord.

Chanter: Grant this, O Lord.

Priest: For a Christian end to our life, painless, without shame and peaceful; and for a good defense before the dread judgment seat of Christ; let us ask of the Lord.

Chanter: Grant this, O Lord.

Priest: Having asked for the unity of the faith and communion in the Holy Spirit, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.

Chanter: To You, O Lord.

Priest: And make us worthy, O Master, with boldness and without fear of condemnation, to dare call upon You, the Heavenly God, as our Father, and to say:

The Lord's Prayer

The entire congregation prays the Lord's Prayer together.

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 Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Priest: Peace be with you all.

Chanter: And with your spirit.

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy.

The Blessing of the Common Cup

Priest: O God, by Your power You created the universe and established the world, adorning everything created by You with beauty. Lord, bless also this common cup given to Your servants (*Name*) and (*Name*) who have been united by You in the communion of marriage.

For blessed is Your holy Name and glorified is Your Kingdom; of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

Chanter: Amen.

Then the Priest gives both the bride and groom wine to drink from the common cup, in remembrance of the miracle of the Lord Jesus in Cana of Galilee, while the following verse from the Book of Psalms is chanted:

Chanter: I shall drink from the cup of salvation and call upon the Name of the Lord (*Psalms 116:13*).

The priest takes the joined hands of the bride and groom, while the sponsor holds the ribbon of the crowns behind them, and they all circle the table three times while the chanter sings:

The Dance of Isaiah – Three Hymns of Joyful Christian Witness

O Isaiah, dance with joy, for the Virgin has conceived and has borne her Son, Emmanuel; He is both God and man and He is called the Dawn from on high. By magnifying Him, we hail the Virgin as blessed.

O holy martyrs who have fought the good fight and won your eternal crowns: entreat the Lord to have mercy on our souls.

Glory to You, O Christ our God: the pride of the apostles and the joy of the martyrs; who proclaimed to all the consubstantial Trinity.

The Removal of the Crowns

Then the Priest removes the crowns, and first says to the groom:

Be exalted, O bridegroom, like Abraham; be blessed like Isaac; and be fruitful like Jacob. Go your way in peace, doing the commandments of God in righteousness.

The priest then removes the crown of the bride and says to her:

And you, O bride, be exalted like Sarah; rejoice as did Rebecca; and be fruitful like Rachel, delighting in your husband, keeping the paths of the Law, for this is what is pleasing to God.

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: O Lord Jesus Christ our God, You were present in Cana of Galilee and blessed the marriage there. Bless these Your servants, *(Name)* and *(Name)* who, by Your Providence, are united in the communion of marriage. Bless their comings and their goings. Fill their life with everything good. *(Here the priest takes the crowns from the heads of the bride and groom and places them on the table.)* Accept their crowns in Your Kingdom unsoiled and undefiled; and preserve them without offense to the ages of ages.

Chanter: Amen.

The Final Blessing

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: May the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; the all-holy, one in essence and life-creating Trinity; one God and one Kingdom; may He bless you, grant you long life, well-favored children, progress in life and in faith; may He fill you with all the good things of the earth, and count you worthy of the promised blessings of His Kingdom, through the intercessions of the holy Theotokos, and of all the saints.

Chanter: Amen.

The Dismissal

Priest: Glory to You, O Christ our God and our hope, glory to You.

Priest: May Christ our true God, Who by His presence in Cana of Galilee proclaimed that marriage is to be honored, through the intercessions of His most-pure and holy Mother, the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary; by the prayers of the holy, glorious, and all-praiseworthy Apostles, especially St. Paul

the Apostle; the prayers of the holy, God-crowned Equals-to-the-Apostles Constantine and Helen, of the holy and great martyr Procopios, and of all the saints, have mercy on us and save us, as our good, loving and merciful Lord.

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us.

Chanter: Amen.

The congregation is seated.