

HOLY MATRIMONY

The Banns of Marriage

The banns of those who are to be married shall be published by the minister at public worship in church on three Sundays, or as required by the Constitution of the Synod of the Church of South India.

The minister says:

I publish the banns of marriage between **Mr (Name)**, son of **Mrs (Name)** and **Mr (Name)** of the pastorate of and **Ms. (Name)**, daughter of **Mrs (Name)** and **Mr (Name)** of the pastorate of If any of you know any just cause why these two persons should not lawfully marry, you are to declare it in writing to the presbyter in charge of this congregation.

This is the first (or second or third) time of asking

The minister then says:

Let us pray for ... and ...(Names)

O God our Father, we ask for your blessing upon... and ...(Names), who seek to be joined together in marriage. Prepare them, we pray you, for this sacred union, and be their guide all the days of their life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

THE ORDER OF SERVICE

ENTRANCE (*Congregation remains standing*)

The persons who are to marry and their relatives and friends enter the church as a hymn/psalm is sung or instrumental music is played. The bride and the groom stand before the officiating presbyter.

INVOCATION

The minister calls people to worship using one of the following, or any other appropriate verse from the Scripture.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. I John 4:16

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Philippians 4:4

Trust in the Lord, and do good; so you will live in the land, and enjoy security. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. Psalm 37:4

Praise the Lord! O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever. Psalm 106:1

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Unless the

Lord guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain. Psalm 127:1

Hymn

Prayer

God of our fathers and mothers, and of their children, by whom we live, and in whom we hope: with grateful hearts we praise your holy name for your infinite goodness. We thank you for our human life with all its gracious ties and tender relationships; and especially at this time for the holy estate of marriage, which you have ordained to guard, to hallow and to perfect the sacred gift of love. You are the Lord of life and love eternal, author of all good and giver of all joy, we thank you and praise you for bringing these your servants, *N* and *N* who are now to be joined in this sacred bond. We thank you that they have found in each other faith and love, that they desire to make their lives one and to dwell together as long as they live. Without your help we cannot do anything. We ask you to graciously bestow upon *N* and *N*, the Holy Spirit in your name as they give each other their vows of . love and faithfulness. Help them with simple trust to commit themselves into your loving care, and enter this marriage covenant in sure dependence upon your unchanging grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, **AMEN**

EXHORTATION

The minister says:

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here in the presence of God to give thanks for the gift of marriage, to witness the joining together of *N* and *N*, to surround them with our prayers and to ask God's blessings upon them, so that they may be strengthened for their life together and nurtured in their love for God.

Marriage is a way of life instituted by God, and the holy Scripture commands all people to hold it in honour. Our Lord Jesus Christ blessed it by his presence at Cana of Galilee.

About this way of life, hear what our Lord says: .

From the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate. Mark 10:6-9

Marriage is therefore not *by any* to be undertaken lightly or ill-advisedly, but seriously and prayerfully, duly considering the purposes for which it is ordained.

It is ordained:

That marriage gives full expression to the love between man and woman: that in marriage husband and wife belong to each other, and with affection and tenderness freely give themselves to each other;

That in marriage husband and wife may give to each other life-long companionship, help, and comfort, both in prosperity and in adversity; That marriage is the foundation of true family life where God may hallow and direct the natural instincts and affections created by the God and redeemed in Christ;

That marriage is God's appointed way for the continuance of the human race; that children may be born and brought up in families in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ to the glory of God; in an atmosphere of security and trust. That, marriage being thus held in honour, human society may stand upon firm foundations.

THE MARRIAGE

The solemn requirement

The minister says:

These two persons have come here to be made one in this holy estate. But if anyone of you here know any just cause why they may not be married according to the discipline of the Church and the law of this land, please make it known now, or else for ever hold your peace.

If no impediment is alleged, he/she says to the persons who are to be married:

I charge you both in the presence of God, that if either of you knows any reason why you may not be joined together in marriage, you do now confess it.

If no impediment is alleged, then:

Affirmation of the Families

The families of both the bride and the groom stand

The minister says:

N and **N (Names of the families)** do you give your blessing to **N** and **N** and promise to do everything in your power to uphold them in their marriage?

Families of the bride and the groom answer:

We give our blessing and promise our loving support

Affirmation of the Congregation

The minister addresses the congregation:

Will all of you witnessing these vows do everything in your power to uphold **N** and **N** in their marriage?

The congregation answers:

We will, with God's help

The minister prays:

Almighty and most merciful God, without whose help we cannot do anything as we ought, we pray that, as you have brought these persons together by your providence, you will enrich them with your grace, that they may enter into the marriage covenant as in your sight, and truly keep the vows they are about to make; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **AMEN**

Declaration of Intent

Then the minister says to the man:

N, will you have this woman, **N**, to be your wife, and cleave to her alone? Will you love her, honour her and be a faithful husband to her as long as you both shall live?

And the man answers:

I will, with God's help.

The minister says to the woman:

N, will you have this man, **N**, to be your husband, and cleave to him alone?, Will you love him, honour him and be a faithful wife to him as long as you both shall live?

And the woman answers:

I will, with God's help.

The Marriage Pledge

The minister says:

N, and **N**, since it is your intention to marry join your right hands and with your promises bind yourselves to each other as husband and wife.

And the man says after the minister:

Before God and these witnesses, I, **N**, take you, **N**, to be my wife, to have and to hold from this day forward; for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in health and in sickness; to love, cherish, and protect, as long as we both shall live, according to God's holy law; and to this I give you my pledge.

They still hold hands, and the woman says after the minister:

Before God and these witnesses, I, **N**, take you, **N**, to be my husband, to have and to hold from this day forward; for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in health and in sickness; to love, cherish, and protect, as long as we both shall live, according to God's holy law; and to this I give you my pledge.

The minister says:

God has heard your vows, and we are witnesses.

The minister may bless the mangalasutra and rings, saying:

By your blessing, O God may these rings and *mangalasutra* be to **N** and **N** symbols of unending love and faithfulness, reminding them of the promises and pledge they have made this day through Jesus Christ our Lord. **AMEN**

OR

Bless these rings and *mangalasutra* O merciful Lord, that those who wear them may ever be faithful one to the other, and continue together in love so long as they both shall live; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **AMEN**

The minister delivers the mangalasutra and ring to the man, who puts it on the woman in the customary manner, and holding it the man says after the minister:

This *mangalasutra* (**ring**) I give you as a sign of our constant faith and abiding love. With my body I honour you, what I am I give to you, what I have I share with you.

The minister delivers the ring to the woman, and holding it the woman says after the minister:

This ring I give you as a sign of our constant faith and abiding love. With my body I honour you, what I am I give to you, what I have I share with you.

The minister declares:

As **N** and **N** have made their pledge to each other before God and before this congregation, I declare that they are now husband and wife, according to the law of this land and the ordinance of God; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **AMEN**

Whom therefore God has joined together, let no one separate.

The man and the woman kneel, while the congregation remains standing, and the minister says:

Most merciful and gracious God, our Father, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. Send your blessing upon **N** and **N**, whom we bless in your name; that, living faithfully together, they may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant between them made, and may ever remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according to your law; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **AMEN**

BLESSING

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

The man and woman go to the Lord's Table. If the ceremony of saphthapadi (seven steps) is observed, the people say or sing Psalm 67 or 128 pausing after each verse while the newly wedded couple take one step forward.

Psalm 67

May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face to shine upon us,
that your way may be known upon earth,
your saving power among all nations. Let
the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth. Let
the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

The earth has yielded its increase;
God, our God, has blessed us. May
God continue to bless us;
let all the ends of the earth revere him.

Psalm 128

Happy is everyone who fears the Lord,
who walks in his ways.
You shall eat the fruit of the labour of your hands; you
shall be happy, and it shall go well with you.

Your wife will be like a fruitful vine
within your house;
Your children will be like olive shoots
around your table.
Thus shall the man be blessed
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 !

After each psalm all say or sing:

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without
end. AMEN**

A Bible may then be given to the newly married couple - the minister says:

May the Word of God be a lamp to your feet and a light to your path. Let the
Bible help you to recognise whatever is true, whatever is honourable,
whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is
commendable, *and* let it show you the path of excellence. The God of peace
will be with you.

Hymn

Scripture Reading

Sermon

PRAYERS

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, save your servant and your handmaid;

And let them put their trust in you.

O Lord, send help from your holy place;

And evermore defend them.

Be unto them a tower of strength;

From the face of their enemy.

O Lord, hear our prayer;

And let our cry come unto you.

Eternal God, creator and preserver of all life, giver of all grace: look with favour
upon the world you have made and redeemed, especially upon N and N. Give
them wisdom and devotion in their common life, that each may be to the other
a strength in need, a counsellor in perplexity, a comfort in sorrow and a
companion in joy. Grant that their wills may be so knit together in your will and
their spirits in your Spirit, that they may grow in love and peace with you and
each other, all the days of their life. Give them the grace, when they hurt each
other, to recognise and confess their fault, and to seek each other's
forgiveness and yours. Make their life together a sign of Christ's love to this
sinful and broken world and grant that, bearing one another's burdens, sharing
one another's joys, and together fulfilling the duties of their home, they may
ever be faithful to each other in love and obedience to your Word through
Jesus Christ our Lord. **AMEN**

O Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly
home: Reign, we ask you, in the home of these your servants as Lord and
King; give them grace that they may serve others as you served others, and
grant that by deed and word they may be witnesses of your saving love to
those amongst whom they live; for your holy name's sake, who lives and
reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. **AMEN**

Eternal God, designer of families: give N and N grace to lead a responsible family life. Give to them the gift of children, and the wisdom to bring them up in your knowledge, love and service. Grant that all who witness these vows today may find their lives strengthened, and that all who are married may depart with their own promises renewed. Enrich with your grace, all husbands, and wives, parents and children, that loving and supporting one another, they may serve those in need and be a sign of your kingdom. Grant that the bonds by which all your children are united to one another may be so transformed by your Spirit that your peace and justice may fill the earth, through Christ our Lord. **AMEN**

Hymn *(The couple will sign the marriage register)*

Lord's prayer

Our Father in heaven, holy be your name. Your kingdom come; your will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. AMEN

Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. **AMEN** Numbers 6:24

OR

The grace of Christ attend you, the love of God surround you, the Holy Spirit keep you, that you may live in faith, abound in hope, and grow in love, both now and for evermore. **AMEN**

A psalm, lyric or hymn may be sung, or instrumental music may be played as the bridal couple leave (congregation remains standing)