

The Blessing of a Civil Marriage

The Holy Eucharist begins as normal.

Collect

O gracious and everliving God, you have created us in your image to live as your children: Look mercifully upon these persons who come to you seeking your blessing, and assist them with your grace, that with true fidelity and steadfast love they may honor and keep the promises and vows they make; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Then one or more of the following passages from Holy Scripture is read. If there is to be a Communion, a passage from the Gospel always concludes the Readings.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (Two are better than one)

Song of Solomon 2:10-13, 8:6-7 (Many waters cannot quench love)

Wisdom 7:22b-30 (Divine essence of wisdom)

Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 17:1-13 (God's wisdom in creation)

Romans 12:9-13 (Let love be genuine)

I Corinthians 13:1-13 (Love is patient and kind)

Ephesians 3:14-19 (The Father from whom ever family is named)

Philippians 2:1-5 (Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus)

Colossians 3:12-17 (Love which binds everything together in harmony)

I John 3:18-24 (Let us love in truth and action)

I John 4:7-16 (Let us love one another for love is of God)

Between the Readings, a Psalm, hymn, or anthem may be sing or said.

Appropriate Psalms are 8, 65, 67, 85:7-13, 127, 133, 148, 149

The Deacon or Minister appointed says,

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to _____.

People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Matthew 5:1-10 (The Beatitudes)

Matthew 5:13-16 (You are the light...Let your light so shine)

Matthew 7:21,24-29 (Like a wise man who built his house upon the rock)

Mark 12:28-34 (Love your neighbor)

John 15:9-12 (Love one another as I have loved you)

John 17:1, 18-26 (That they may be one as we are one)

After the Gospel, the Reader says

The Gospel of the Lord.

People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

After the Gospel (and homily), the married couple stands before the Celebrant, who addresses them in these or similar words,

N. and N., you have come here today to seek the blessing of God and God's Church upon your marriage.

The Celebrant then addresses each person individually, saying

N., you have taken N. to be your *wife/husband/spouse*. Do you promise to love *her/him*, comfort *her/him*, honor and keep *her/him*, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, to be faithful to *her/him* as long as you both shall live?

The person answers I do.

The Celebrant then addresses the congregation, saying

Will you who have witnessed these promises do all in your power to uphold these two persons in their marriage?

People We will.

If rings already exchanged are to be blessed, the couple extends their hands towards the priest or if new rings are to be given, the priest may ask God's blessing on the rings as follows,

Bless, O Lord, these rings to be a sign of the vows by which these persons have bound themselves to each other; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

If new rings are to be given, the giver places the ring on the ring-finger of the other's hand and says,

N., I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (or in the Name of God).

Then the Celebrant joins the right hands of the couple and says,

Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.

People Amen.

The Prayers

The Deacon or other person appointed reads the following prayers or another appropriate form.

Let us pray.

Eternal God, creator and preserver of all life, author of salvation, and giver of all grace: Look with favor upon the world you have made, and for which your Son gave his life, and especially upon ____ and ____ united in marriage. *Amen.*

Give them wisdom and devotion in the ordering of their common life, that each may be to the other a strength in need, a counselor in perplexity, a comfort in sorrow, and a companion in joy. *Amen.*

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 one another all the days of their life. *Amen.*

Give them grace, when they hurt each other, to recognize and acknowledge their fault, and to seek each other's forgiveness and yours. *Amen.*

Make their life together a sign of Christ's love to this sinful and broken world, that unity may overcome estrangement, forgiveness heal guilt, and joy conquer despair. *Amen.*

Bestow on them, if it is your will, the gift and heritage of children, and the grace to bring them up to know you, to love you, and to serve you. *Amen.*

Give them such fulfillment of their mutual affection that they may reach out in love and concern for others. *Amen.*

Grant that all married persons who have witnessed these vows may find their lives strengthened and their loyalties confirmed. *Amen.*

Grant that the bonds of our common humanity, by which all your children are united one to another, and the living to the dead, may be so transformed by your grace, that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven; where, O Father, with your Son, and the Holy Spirit, you live and reign in perfect unity, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Blessing of the Marriage

The people remain standing. The couple kneels, and the Priest says one of the following prayers,

Most gracious God, we give you thanks for your tender love in sending Jesus Christ to come among us, to be born of a human mother, and to make the way of the cross to be the way of life. By the power of your Holy Spirit, pour out the abundance of your blessing upon _____ and _____. Defend them from every enemy. Lead them into all peace. Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts, a mantle about their shoulders, and a crown upon their foreheads. Bless them in their work and in their companionship; in their sleeping and in their waking; in their joys and in their sorrows; in their life and in their death. Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that table where your saints feast for ever in your heavenly home; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

or this

O God, you have so consecrated the covenant of marriage that in it is represented the spiritual unity between Christ and his Church: Send therefore your blessing upon these your servants, that they may so love, honor, and cherish each other in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The couple remains kneeling and the Priest adds this blessing,

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep you; the Lord mercifully with his favor look upon you, and fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace; that you may faithfully live together in this life, and in the age to come have life everlasting. *Amen.*

The Peace

The Celebrant may say to the people

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And also with you.

The couple then greets each other, after which greetings may be exchanged throughout the congregation.

At the Eucharist

The liturgy then continues with the Offertory, at which the couple presents the offerings of bread and wine, if so desired.

Proper Preface

Of Baptism or of the Season or of Marriage

At the Communion, it is appropriate that the couple receives Communion first, after the ministers.

In place of the usual Prayer after Communion, the following is said,

O God, the giver of all that is true and lovely and gracious: We give you thanks for binding us together in these holy mysteries of the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Grant that by your Holy Spirit, *N.* and *N.*, may continue to become one in heart and soul, live in fidelity and peace, and obtain those eternal joys prepared for all who love you; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

As the wedding party leaves the church, a hymn, psalm, or anthem may be sung, or instrumental music may be played.