

THE RITE OF SECOND MARRIAGE

CONCERNING SECOND, THIRD AND FOURTH MARRIAGES

Second Marriage

- A second marriage is an extension of the Church's mercy due to human failings and frailty and is permitted only in certain circumstances.
- If one (or both) of the parties has been once married and then divorced (rather than widowed), permission from the Metropolitan Archbishop must be petitioned and received in order for the marriage to take place. This petition will be filed by the Priest in accordance with the policies and procedures specified in the Archdiocesan Priest's Guide.
- If both parties have been once previously married and then either widowed or divorced, the Rite of Second Marriage will be used. If the Orthodox party has been once previously married and then widowed or divorced but the non-Orthodox party has not been previously married, the Rite of Second Marriage will be used. If the Orthodox party has not been married but the non-Orthodox party has been once previously married and then widowed or divorced, the usual Rite of Marriage may be used.
- The bishop does not serve at the Rite of Second Marriage. Traditionally the clergy do not attend the wedding dinner or reception.
- Only one priest serves at the Rite of Second Marriage, and that without a deacon.
- If it is the second marriage of the bride, her gown may not be white or elaborate nor does her father give her away.
- If it is the second marriage of the bride, there is no bridal procession but the wedding party is simply led by the priest from the narthex to the table on the solea.

Third Marriage

- A third marriage is the final extension of the Church's mercy due to human failings and frailty and is permitted only in very exceptional circumstances.
- If one (or both) of the parties has been twice married and then widowed or divorced or a combination thereof, permission from the Metropolitan Archbishop must be petitioned and received in order for a third marriage to take place. This petition will be filed by the Priest in accordance with the policies and procedures specified in the Archdiocesan Priest's Guide.
- In all instances the Rite of Second Marriage will be used even if one of the parties has never before been married.
- The bishop does not serve at a third marriage nor do any of the clergy attend the wedding dinner or reception.
- Only one priest serves at a third marriage, and that without a deacon.
- No bridal gown may be worn, but rather a dignified dress. If it is not the bride's first marriage, the dress may not be white.
- The number of guests at a third marriage is to be kept to a minimum.
- The wedding party at a third marriage is limited to the bridal couple and two witnesses.
- There is no formal processional or recessional for a third marriage. The four persons of the wedding party simply assemble at the table on the solea before the start of the service and then depart afterwards without fanfare.

Fourth Marriage

- A fourth marriage is never permitted by the Sacred Canons to anyone for any reason.

† THE RITE OF SECOND MARRIAGE

As it appears in both Greek and Arabic language Euchologia

An analogion is set in the center of the solea. Upon it are placed two lighted candles in candlesticks, the book of holy gospels, the blessing cross, the two rings, the two crowns, and the common cup. They that desire to be joined together and their two sponsors stand before the analogion, facing east, the groom on the south and the bride on the north at his immediate left. Having opened the curtain and holy doors, the priest, vested in exorasson, epitachelion and phelonion, exits the holy place through the holy doors and comes to stand before the analogion, and, facing east, begins the service:

PRIEST: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

PRIEST: Glory Thee, O our God, glory to Thee.

O heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who art everywhere present and fillest all things, the Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come, and abide in us, and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O good One.

READER: Holy God ... Glory *and* Both now ... All-holy Trinity ... Lord, have mercy (*thrice*) ... Our Father ...

PRIEST: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

READER: Amen.

CHOIR: (*Chants the apolytikion of the day.*)

PRIEST: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: (*Responds* Lord, have mercy *to each petition until noted.*)

PRIEST: For the peace from above and the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

For the peace of the whole world, the good estate of the holy churches of God and the union of all men, let us pray to the Lord.

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

For the servants of God, *N.* and *N.*, the protection which is from God and for their life together, let us pray to the Lord.

That they may live together uprightly and in oneness of mind, let us pray to the Lord.

Help us; save us; have mercy on us; and keep us, O God, by thy grace.

Calling to remembrance our all-holy immaculate, most blessed and glorious Lady the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and each other and all of our life unto Christ our God.

CHOIR: To thee, O Lord.

PRIEST: For unto thee are due all glory, honor and worship to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

† THE BETROTHAL

PRIEST: Let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: O eternal God, who hast brought into unity those who were sundered, and hast ordained for them an indissoluble bond of love; who didst bless Isaac and Rebecca, and didst make them heirs of thy promise: Bless also these thy servants, *N.* and *N.*, guiding them unto every good work. For thou art a merciful God who lovest mankind, and unto thee we ascribe glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

Turning to face the bridal pair, the priest blesses them, saying:

PRIEST: Peace be to all.

CHOIR: And to thy spirit.

PRIEST: Bow your heads unto the Lord.

CHOIR: To thee, O Lord.

Turning again to face the east, the priest says:

PRIEST: O Lord our God, who hast espoused the Church as a pure virgin from among the Gentiles: Bless this betrothal, and unite and preserve these thy servants in peace and oneness of mind. For unto thee are due all glory, honor and worship to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

Then the priest takes the ring of the bride and, turning to face the groom, blesses him, making with it the sign of the Cross over him thrice, touching the head of the bride with it each time, as he intones each time:

PRIEST: The servant of God, *N.*, is betrothed to the handmaid of God, *N.*, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

And the choir responds each time:

CHOIR: Amen.

The priest then places the ring of the bride on the fourth finger of the right hand of the groom.

Then the priest takes the ring of the groom and, turning to face the bride, blesses her, making with it the sign of the Cross over her thrice, touching the head of the groom with it each time, as he intones each time:

PRIEST: The handmaid of God, *N.*, is betrothed to the servant of God, *N.*, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

And the choir responds each time:

CHOIR: Amen.

The priest then places the ring of the groom on the fourth finger of the right hand of the bride.

The bridal pair then exchange the rings thrice as the priest, facing east, says the following prayer:

PRIEST: Let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: O Master, Lord our God, who sparest all and providest for all, who knowest the secrets of men and hast understanding of all things: Do thou the Fashioner and Creator, who knowest the weakness of human nature,

cleanse our sins, and forgive the transgression of thy servants, calling them to repentance, granting them remission of iniquities, cleansing of sins, and forgiveness of transgressions, whether voluntary or involuntary. O thou who didst forgive Rahab the harlot, and didst accept the repentance of the Publican, remember not our sins of ignorance from our youth up. For if thou shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, Lord who should stand before thee? Or what flesh should be justified before thee? For thou only art righteous, sinless, holy, plenteous in mercy, of great compassion, and who turnest away from the evils of men. Do thou thyself, O Master, who hast taken unto thyself thy servants *N.* and *N.*, unite them to one another in love; grant unto them the conversion of the Publican, the tears of the Harlot, and the confession of the Thief, that, through repentance with all their heart, doing thy commandment in peace and oneness of mind, they may be counted worthy of thy heavenly kingdom. For thou art he that ordereth all things and unto thee we ascribe glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

Turning to face the bridal pair, the priest blesses them, saying:

PRIEST: Peace be to all.

CHOIR: And to thy spirit.

PRIEST: Bow your heads unto the Lord.

CHOIR: To thee, O Lord.

Turning again to face the east, the priest says:

PRIEST: O Lord Jesus Christ, Word of God, who wast lifted up upon the precious and life-giving Cross, and didst thereby tear up the handwriting against us, and didst deliver us from the violence of the devil: Do thou cleanse the transgressions of thy servants, for, unable to bear the burden of the day and the burning of the flesh, they have come to a second communion of marriage, in accordance with that which thou hast lawfully appointed by thy chosen vessel, Paul the Apostle, saying, because of our humble state, "It is better to marry in the Lord than to burn." Do thou thyself, as thou art good and the Lover of mankind, have mercy, and pardon, cleanse, cast off and forgive our debts, for thou art he that tooketh our infirmities upon thy shoulders. For there is none that is sinless or without defilement for as much as one day of his life, save only thou, who, without sin, didst bear flesh, and who bestowest upon us eternal passionlessness. For thou art God, the God of them that repent, and unto thee we ascribe glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

Turning to face the bridal pair, the priest says:

PRIEST: Let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: O holy God, who didst create man out of the dust and didst fashion his wife and join her unto him as a help meet, for it seemed good to thy majesty that man should not be alone upon the earth: Do thou the same Lord extend thy hand from thy dwelling-place, and join this thy servant *N.*, and this thy hand *N.*,¹ for by thee is the husband united unto the wife. Unite them in oneness of mind and one flesh, and grant unto them fair children for education in thy faith and fear. For thine is the might and thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

† THE CROWNING

Then the priest takes the crown of the groom and blesses him, making with it the sign of the Cross over him thrice, touching the head of the bride with it each time, as he intones each time:

PRIEST: The servant of God, *N.*, is crowned to the handmaid of God, *N.*, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

And the choir responds each time:

CHOIR: Amen.

The priest then places the crown on the head of the groom.

Then the priest takes the crown of the bride and blesses her, making with it the sign of the Cross over her thrice, touching the head of the groom with it each time, as he intones each time:

PRIEST: The handmaid of God, *N.*, is crowned to the servant of God, *N.*, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

And the choir responds each time:

CHOIR: Amen.

¹ As he says this, the priest joins the right hand of the groom with the right hand of the bride.

The priest takes the groom's crown in his right hand, and the bride's crown in his left, and exchanges them thrice, intoning each time:

PRIEST: O Lord our God, crown them with glory and honor.

After securely replacing the crowns upon the heads of the bridal pair, the priest says:

PRIEST: Let us attend.

READER: *(Prokeimenon)* Thou hast set upon their heads crowns of precious stones. They asked life of thee and thou gavest it them.

(Stichos) For thou shalt give them blessing for ever and ever, thou shalt gladden them in joy with thy countenance.

PRIEST: Wisdom.

READER: The reading from the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Ephesians.

PRIEST: Let us attend.

READER: Brethren: Give thanks always for all things to the God and Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, subordinating yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ. Wives, be subordinating yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the Church, and himself is Saviour of the body. But even as the Church subordinateth herself to Christ, so also the wives to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, be loving your own wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself up for her, in order that he might sanctify her, having cleanser her in the laver of the water with the word, that he might present her to himself the glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such things; but that she may be holy and unblemished. So ought the husbands to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loveth his own wife loveth himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as also the Lord the Church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones; because of this "shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall be into one flesh." This mystery is great; but I speak in regard to Christ and in regard to the Church. However do ye severally be loving in this manner each one his own wife as himself, and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

The priest blesses the reader, saying:

PRIEST: Peace be to thee that readest.

CHOIR: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

READER: *(Stichos)* Thou, O Lord, shalt keep us and shalt preserve us from this generation, and for evermore.

CHOIR: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

PRIEST: Wisdom. Stand upright. Let us hear the holy gospel. Peace be to all.

CHOIR: And to the spirit.

PRIEST: The reading from the holy gospel according to John the Theologian.

CHOIR: Glory to thee, O Lord, glory to thee.

Facing west, the priest chants the appointed pericope:

PRIEST: Let us attend. At that time there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the Mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples, to the marriage. And after they fell short of wine, the Mother of Jesus saith to him, "They have no wine." Jesus saith to her, "What is it to me and thee, woman? My hour is not yet come." His Mother saith to the servants, "Whatsoever he saith to you, do it." And there were standing there six stone waterpots, according to the purification of the Jews, containing two or three measures each. Jesus saith to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the top. And Jesus saith to them, "Draw out now, and bear it to the master of the feast." And they brought it. Now when the master of the feast tasted the water that had become wine, and knew not from what place it was – but the servants who had drawn the water knew – the master of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith to him, "Every man first setteth forth the good wine, and whenever they have drunk freely, then the inferior. As for thee, thou hast kept the good wine until now." This did Jesus in Cana of Galilee as the beginning of the signs, and it made manifest his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

After blessing with the gospel book, the priest offers it for veneration by the bridal pair as the choir responds:

CHOIR: Glory to thee, O Lord, glory to thee.

After replacing the gospel book upon the analogion, the priest, facing east, intones:

PRIEST: Let us all say with our whole soul and with our whole mind, let us say:

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: O Lord almighty, the God of our fathers, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Have mercy on us, O God, according to thy great mercy, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy

PRIEST: Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation and visitation for the servants of God *N.* and *N.*, and for their parents, their attendants, and all here present.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For thou art a merciful God and lovest mankind and unto thee we ascribe glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

PRIEST: Let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: O Lord our God, who, in thy saving providence, didst vouchsafe by thy presence in Cana of Galilee to declare marriage honorable: Do thou, the same Lord, now also maintain in peace and concord thy servants *N.* and *N.*, whom thou hast been well-pleased to join together. Show their marriage to be honorable; preserve their bed undefiled; and grant them to lead an upright and blameless life unto a ripe old age, walking in thy commandments with a pure heart. For thou art our God, the God of mercy and salvation, and unto thee we ascribe glory together with thine unoriginate Father and thine all-holy and good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

PRIEST: Help us; save us; have mercy on us; and keep us, O God, by thy grace.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: That the whole evening may be perfect, holy, peaceful and sinless, let us ask of the Lord.

CHOIR: *(Responds Grant this, O Lord to this and the remaining petitions.)*

An angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies, let us ask of the Lord.

Pardon and forgiveness of our sins and transgressions, let us ask of the Lord.

All things good and profitable for our souls and peace for the world, let us ask of the Lord.

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

A Christian ending to our life, painless, blameless, peaceful and a good defense before the fearful judgment seat of Christ, let us ask.

Asking for the unity of the faith and the communion of the Holy Spirit, let us commend ourselves and each other and all our life unto Christ our God.

CHOIR: To thee, O Lord.

PRIEST: And vouchsafe, O Master, that with boldness and without condemnation we may dare to call upon thee, the heavenly God, as Father and to say:

READER: 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 the evil one.

PRIEST: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

Turning to face the bridal pair, the priest blesses them, saying:

PRIEST: Peace be to all.

CHOIR: And to thy spirit.

PRIEST: Bow your heads unto the Lord.

CHOIR: To thee, O Lord.

PRIEST: Let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

Turning to face the east, the priest says the prayer of blessing of the common cup:

PRIEST: O God, who hast created all things by thy might, and hast made fast the round world, and adornest the crown of all things which thou hast made: Bless now, with thy spiritual blessing, this common cup which thou dost give to those who are now united in community of marriage. For blessed is thy name and glorified is thy kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

The priest then gives the bridal pair to drink of the common cup, thrice each in turn beginning with the groom, while the choir chants:

CHOIR: I will take the cup of salvation and I will call upon the name of the Lord.

When they have partaken, the priest holds the blessing Cross in this right hand while with his left hand he takes hold of the right arm of the best man,² who with his left hand takes hold of the right arm of the groom, who with his right hand holds the right hand of the bride, who with her left hand takes hold of the maid of honor's right arm. They all circle the analogion thrice while the choir chants the following hymns:

CHOIR: *(Tone 5)* O Isaiah, dance thy joy, for a Virgin was with child and hath borne a son, Emmanuel, both God and man, and Orient is his name. Magnifying him we call the Virgin blessed.

(Tone 7) Ye holy martyrs, who fought the good fight and have received your crowns: Entreat ye the Lord that he will have mercy on our souls.

(Tone 7) Glory to thee, O Christ our God, the apostles' Boast, the martyrs' Joy, whose preaching was the consubstantial Trinity.

When all have returned to their places before the analogion, the priest faces the groom, takes his crown in his right hand and, holding it above the groom's head, says:

PRIEST: Be thou exalted, O bridegroom, like unto Abraham, and be thou blessed like unto Isaac, and do thou multiply like unto Jacob, walking in peace and keeping the commandments of God in righteousness.

² In some traditions the priest does not hold the blessing Cross nor does he hold the arm of the best man; rather he stands opposite and facing the wedding party and censes them from each side of the analogion as they all circle it three times.

The priest then blesses the groom with his crown, offers it for him to kiss and then holds it in his left hand. He then faces the bride, takes her crown in his right hand and, holding it above her head, says:

PRIEST: And thou, O bride, be thou exalted like unto Sarah, and exult like unto Rebecca, and do thou multiply like unto Rachel, and rejoice thou in thy husband, fulfilling the conditions of the Law, for so it is well-pleasing unto God.

The priest then blesses the bride with her crown, offers it for her to kiss and then holds both crowns in his right hand and says:

PRIEST: Let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: O God, our God, who didst come to Cana of Galilee, and didst bless there the marriage feast: *(the priest blesses the couple with the crowns, saying)* Bless also these thy servants, who through thy good providence are now united together in wedlock. Bless their goings out and their comings in, replenish their life with good things, receive their crowns into thy kingdom *(the priest turns and places the crowns on the analogion, and continues, saying)*, preserving them spotless, blameless and without reproach unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

Turning to face the bridal pair, the priest blesses them, saying:

PRIEST: Peace be to all.

CHOIR: And to thy spirit.

PRIEST: Bow your heads unto the Lord.

CHOIR: To thee, O Lord.

Still facing bridal pair, the priest, holding the blessing Cross, says:

PRIEST: May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the all-holy, consubstantial and life-giving Trinity, one Godhead and one Kingdom, *(the priest bless the couple, saying)* bless you, and grant unto you length of days, fair children, prosperity of life and faith, and fill you with an abundance of all earthly good things, and make you worthy to obtain the blessings of the promise, through the intercessions of the holy Theotokos and of all the saints.

CHOIR: Amen.

PRIEST: Glory to thee, O Christ our God and our Hope, glory to thee.

CHOIR: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Father, bless.

PRIEST: May he who by his presence at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee did declare marriage to be an honorable estate, Christ our true God, through the intercessions of his all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; at the supplications of the holy, glorious and all apostles; of the holy, God-crowned Sovereigns and Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine and Helen; of the holy, glorious and right-victorious Great Martyr Procopios; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God Joachim and Anna; and of all the saints, have mercy upon you and save you, forasmuch as he is good and loveth mankind.

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

CHOIR: Amen.

The priest offers the blessing Cross to be revered by the groom and the bride. Then the groom may kiss the bride before they and their sponsors depart the church temple.