

Marriage Services

(Authorized for experimental use in the dioceses
of Colombo and Kurunagala from 2016)

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Notes to the Marriage Service

1. Preparation

It is the custom, law and practice of the Church of Ceylon to offer preparation for marriage for couples who are soon to be married, as well as to be available for support and counseling in the years that follow.

2. The Banns

The Banns are to be published in the church of each Christian partner (Constitution Chapter 26 Rule 5) on three Sundays at the time of Divine Service by the Minister in the form set out in *The Book of Common Prayer* or in the following form:

I publish the banns of marriage between N2 of and N1 of This is the *first/second/third* time of asking. If anyone of you know any reason in law why they may not marry each other you are to declare it.

We pray for these couples (or N and N) as they prepare their wedding(s).

A suitable prayer may be said.

Lord of love we pray for N2S and N1S (or these couples). Grant to them joy of heart, seriousness of mind and reverence of spirit, that as they enter into the oneness of marriage they may be strengthened and guided by you, and throughout their married life together, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

When one partner is a member of one of the Churches of the Confederation of the Christian Churches, it is not necessary for that partner to give up membership of that Church for the banns to be published in a church of the Church of Ceylon.

3. Clarifications

N1S is the groom's name and surname, and N2S is the bride's name and surname. The words Presbyter, Minister, Clergy person, Presider are interchangeable and refers to a duly ordained person in one of the member churches of the Confederation of Christian Churches of Sri Lanka or of a Church in the Anglican Communion or any other Church in communion with the Church of Ceylon.

4. Hymns, Canticles, Postures & Wedding Podium

Hymns and Canticles may be used at suitable points during the service, where a particular posture is stated, the local custom in the parish may be used.

It is customary in Asian and Hebrew weddings for the ceremony to take place in a wedding podium (*'Poruwa'*, *'Manavarai'* if required covered with a canopy, Hebrew *'Chuppah'*) symbolizing the open hospitable home the couple will build together (*Gen.18*, Abraham and Sarah)

5. Confession and Absolution

The Confession may be done after the Ministry of the Word as given in this Order of Service or in the Gathering at the beginning. In the Hebrew culture the Wedding Day is considered a personal Day of Atonement for the couple, as their past sins are forgiven when they merge into a new complete soul as one.

6. Readings and Sermon

At least one reading from the Bible must be used, preferably two – one from the Old Testament or Apocrypha, and one from the New Testament.

Where there is a Nuptial Eucharist a Gospel Reading must be used. If the couple so desires there may be an additional reading from civil literature. Chairs may be provided for the bride or groom or they may sit on the ground in the wedding podium.

7. 'Giving Away'

This traditional ceremony is optional. Immediately before the couple exchange vows, the minister may ask:

Who brings this woman to be married to this man?

The bride's father (or mother, or another member of her family or a friend representing the family) gives the bride's right hand to the Minister who puts it in the bridegroom's right hand. Alternatively, after the bride and bridegroom have made their declarations, the Minister may ask the parents/guardians of the bride and bridegroom in these or similar words.

N1 and N2 have declared their intention towards each other. As their parents/ guardians. Will you now entrust your son and daughter to one another as they come to be married?

Both sets of parents respond: **We will.**

8. The Declarations and the Vows

The *Book of Common Prayer*(1960, 1662) version of the Declarations, and / or the alternative vows may be used. The couple repeat the vows after the Minister, or may read them. If preferred, the question to the bride, and her vow, may come before the question to the bridegroom and his vow.

9. The Giving of Rings/Thali

If desired, the bride and bridegroom may each place a ring on the fourth finger of the other's left hand, and may then say together the words 'N' I give you this ring/thali. In the Tamil culture the ring is placed in the index finger of the right hand.

10. The Prayers & Planning the Service

A form of intercession is provided. Other suitable forms may be used, especially prayers which the couple have written or selected in co-operation with the Minister. Whatever form is used, silence may be kept as part of the intercession. Free prayer may alternatively be offered. The Minister shall plan the whole service in consultation with the couple.

11. Registration of Marriage

The law requires that the marriage takes place before 6.00pm and that the registration is done immediately after the service.

12. Holy Communion

For communicant members of the Church it is appropriate that they receive communion soon after their marriage. For some this may make it appropriate for the marriage to take place within the context of a celebration of the Holy Eucharist – as was probably envisaged in the first Anglican Book of Common Prayer. The order of the Marriage Service here presented is within a Holy Eucharist but with an optional alternative without the Holy Eucharist.

13. Marriage without the Eucharist

In a marriage without a Holy Eucharist, the prayers of the people in this Order of Service are transferred to a position after the Nuptial Blessing and used as The Holy Table Prayers before a final Blessing and Dismissal. Other patterns for Holy Table Prayers (which could also be free prayer) are given in the Supplementary Texts.

14. Texts, Cultural Customs and Flexibility

Although the general pattern and sequence of this order should be maintained, other suitable texts may be used after consultation of the Minister and the couple. Cultural

customs though recommended are **totally optional**. The symbolism of these customs and their Christian adaptation should be explained.

15. Ecumenical Provisions

Where a Minister of another Christian Church or Ecclesial Body is invited to participate at the Marriage Service, the permission and procedures set out in the Constitution (Chap. 23: Canons 17-18) are to be followed. Where the other Minister is from one of the Covenanted Churches they may say any part of the Service Order. At any Marriage in a church of the Church of Ceylon, it would be appropriate with the permission of the couple, to invite a neighboring ordained Presbyterian of one of the member Churches of the Confederation of Christian Churches to participate. Where the couple come from different Communion the Bishop of the Diocese may authorize variations to the Order of Service as are here set out.

The Marriage Service

This may be read by those present before the service begins.

A wedding is one of life's great moments, a time of solemn commitment as well as good wishes, feasting and joy. St John tells us how Jesus shared in such an occasion at Cana, and gave there a sign of new beginning as he turned water into wine.

Marriage is intended by God to be a creative relationship, as God's blessing enables husband and wife to love and support each other in good times and in bad, and to share in the care and upbringing of children. For Christians, marriage is also an invitation to share life together in the spirit of Jesus Christ. It is based upon a solemn, public and life-long covenant between a man and a woman, declared and celebrated in the presence of God, before legal witnesses, Clergy (as witnesses of the Church) and congregation.

On this their wedding day the bride and bridegroom face each other, make their promises and receive God's blessing. They are the Ministers of this Service. You are witnesses of the marriage, and express your support by your presence and your prayers. Your support does not end today: the couple will value continued encouragement in the days and years ahead of them.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13: 4-7

Marriage is a Rite of Passage where a man and a woman undergo **Separation** from their families to cross a doorway or liminality of **Transition** to a new relationship by the Marriage Rite, and then there is Incorporation back into their communities as the same people but different as a single couple with a new status.

In the earliest Christian century, the Jewish view was held that marriage was a civil contract and only blessing prayers became the central feature-still the central act of the Service. Over the Centuries it developed and traditionally consists of: (1) **Exhortation**/Preface, (2) The bans, declarations and **consent**, (3) The vows/**espousal**, (4) **Proclamation**, and (5) Crowning/nuptial **blissing**.

These blend with the 4 – Section Supper (*Lk. 24; John 6, Acts 2:42*), with (1) and (2) in the **Gathering**, then **God's Word**, and (3) to (5) in the **Prayers** (including the 4-actions of taking, thanksgiving, breaking bread, sharing, when we receive New

Life) and the **Dismissal** – a foretaste of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. (Rev 19:9). Life, faith and love are so intimately in contact with each other in marriage that it belongs to the order of Creation and of Redemption and of Sanctification.

Entrance of the Bridegroom and party.

In the Sinhala culture the bridegrooms feet may be washed by a male relative of the bride, a token of unreserved acceptance into the brides family.

In the Tamil culture it is customary for each partner to be received and garlanded (Isa.61:10) by the other partner's parents/family and be led to the decorated podium(=manavarai) where they will sit on the ground facing each other in front of the congregation.

Entrance of the Bride and retinue, and Clergy to the Entrance Song.

The bride may enter the church escorted by her father or a family member or alone, or the bride and groom may enter the church together.

The bride and groom are led to the decorated podium(poruwa or manavarai) during the entrance hymn/lyric

Baptismal water may be sprinkled on the bride ,bridegroom and their parents by the Presbyter

THE ENTRANCE SONG OR CHANT

The Congregation remains standing.

(1) GATHERING TOGETHER

(To change us from individuals to one corporate body of Christ)

Presbyter Homage to the ONE GOD, the Ultimate Reality – That You Are: + The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

All **Homage to the ONE GOD, the Ultimate Reality – That You Are: + The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Presbyter God is love, and those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them (*1 John 4: 16*)

...Silence.....Parents of the couple light two lamps.....

Blessed be God.

All **Blessed be God's reign forever. Loving-Kindness to all. So be it.**

Minister 1 Let us pray

All **God of wonder and of joy: grace comes from you, and you alone are the source of life and love. We thank you for the gift of marriage and for the joys it brings. Stir up the All Holy Spirit in us, as we share in this wedding service to support N2 and N1 with our love; and grant that loving one another, they may continue in your loving-kindness throughout their lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Confession may be said here or as given in this Order after the Ministry of the Word

All sit. The couple stands before the Clergy.

EXHORTATION ON MARRIAGE

(May be said fully by one minister or shared with other ordained Ministers)

Minister 1 We have come together in the presence of God Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to witness and celebrate the marriage of *N2 and N1* and to pray God's blessings upon them now and in the years ahead.

Marriage is a gift of God our Creator, whose Intention is that husband and wife should be united in heart, body and mind. In their union they fulfill their love for each other as Christ is joined to Christ's bride the Church.

Marriage was blessed by Jesus Christ our Redeemer at Cana and is given to provide the stability necessary for family life, so that children may be born, cared for lovingly and grow to full maturity.

Minister 2 Marriage is a way of life promised in the presence of the Holy Spirit our Comforter , to be upheld and honoured.

No one should enter into it lightly. It involves a serious and life-long commitment to each other's good in a union of strength, sympathy and delight. It is a sign of unity in a broken world and for a divided church; the covenanted love of husband and wife enriches society and strengthens community.

10

God as Trinity reveals the very nature of love in relationships.

N2 and N1 we rejoice with you;
we are glade to join with you in the
celebration of your marriage,

To witness your vows, to pray with you
and to wish you joy in your life together.

THE BANNES AND DECLARATIONS OF CONSENT

The witnesses will come forward and stand near the couple.

The Presbyterian in charge: says to the congregation.

First, I am required to ask anyone present who knows a reason why each of you may not lawfully marry, to declare it now.

Minister 2 says to the couple.

N2S and N1S the vows you are about to take are to be made in the presence of God, who is judge of all and knows all the secrets of our hearts; therefore if either of you know a reason why these persons may not be lawfully marry, you must declare it now.

Minister 1 says to the bridegroom.

N1, do you consent to take N2 to be your wife? Do you love her, and will you comfort her, forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

Bridegroom: I do.

Minister 2 says to the bride.

N2, do you consent to take N1 to be your husband? Do you love him, and will you comfort him, forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

Bride: I do.

The Presbyter then addresses the congregation.

Do you, the families and friends of N2 and N1,
support and uphold them in their life together
now and in the years to come?

All: We do.

(All stand. A short hymn / lyric may be sung)

All sit

(2) MINISTRY OF THE WORD

(God speak to us)

THE FIRST READING : *One of the following or another selected lesson from the Old Testament /Apocrypha or from civil literature:*

Gen 1:26-28, 31a

Gen 2:4-9,15-24

Ruth 1:16-18

Sg of Sgs 2:10-13; 3:4; 8:6-7

Isa 61:10; 62:3-5

Tobit 8:4-8

Ecclus 26:1-4

OR

Rom 7:1 – 2 , 9 – 18

Rom 8:31 – 39

Rom 12:1 – 2 , 9 - 13

Rom 15:1 – 7 , 13

1 Cor. 13

Eph. 3: 14 – 21

Eph. 4: 1 – 6

Eph. 4: 25 – 32

Eph. 5: 21 – 33

Philip. 1:9 – 11

Philip. 4: 4 – 9

Col. 3: 12 – 17

1 John 3 : 18 – 24

1 John 4: 7 – 12 , 15 – 17

Rev. 19: 6 – 9

.....Silence.....

Reader: Holy wisdom, holy word.

All: **Thanks be to God**

THE RESPONSORIAL PSALM

(A response to the first reading from the hymn book of the Lord Jesus)

One of the following may be sung:

Psalm 23

Psalm 67

Psalm 121

Psalm 127

Psalm 128*

Glory to the Father and / to the Son and / to the Holy / Spirit;*
As it was in the beginning, is now: and will be for / ever /A
/men.

If the psalm is not sung a Gradual Hymn may be used.

THE GOSPEL READING:

All (-sing) **Hallelu Yah!!!!** *(Hallelu Yah is the Hebrew word for Praise Yahweh-God)*

Reader Each of you, should love his wife as himself,
and a wife should respect her husband *(Eph. 5:33)*

All **Hallelu Yah!!!!**

Reader: Listen to the Good News proclaimed in the Gospel according to, chapter verses

(Reader and listeners mark a cross + with the thumb on the forehead, lips and chest symbolic of proclaiming the Gospel with understanding, words and deeds.)

All **+ Glory to + Christ our + Saviour.**

One of the following or another selected Gospel Reading:

Mark 4:30-32

Mark 10:6 – 9 , 13 - 16

Matt. 5:1-10

Matt. 5:21-26

Matt. 7:21, 24-29

John 2: 1 – 11

John 15: 1 - 8

John 15: 9 - 17

.....Silence.....

This is the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ

All **Praise to Christ our Lord.**

All sit.

HOMILY

Silence to contemplate on the Ministry of the Word and to confess our sins.

(3) MINISTRY OF PRAYER

(We respond to be transformed in the Prayers, Espousal & Eucharist)

CONFESSION

Minister 2: God, in our weakness you are our strength.....
(silence...) Lord have mercy.

All **Lord have mercy!!**

The Presbyter drops a betel leaf on the ground during each response, as symbols of repentance of our sins against God and neighbour, and witnessed by mother earth.

Minister 2: Christ, when we stumble you raise us up...
(silence...) Christ have mercy

All **Christ have mercy !!**

Minister 2: Holy Spirit when we fall you give us new life...
(silence...) Lord have mercy

All **Lord have mercy!!**

Presbyter: If we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse you from all unrighteousness *(1 John 1:9)*

Amen

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

A member of the congregation

God of grace, source of all love, we thank you for bringing N1 and N2 to this day, and pray that they may live together in love and faithfulness to the end of their lives.

.....*Silence*.....Lord of life.

All **Hear us in your love.**

Leader Through your Redeemer the Lord Jesus Christ, help N2 and N1 to be patient, gentle and forgiving, to nurture their family with devotion and their children grow in body, mind and spirit
.....*Silence*.....Lord of life.

All **Hear us in your love.**

Leader Send your Holy Spirit to guide your Church in this land and all who confess the name of Christ, that there may be understanding between separated traditions and that there be unity and concord in the Confederation of Christian Churches of Sri Lanka
.....*Silence*.....Lord of life.

All **Hear us in your love.**

Leader Enrich our families, communities, churches and all people in our land, that there may be Christ's loving-kindness and peace among us and between us.
.....*Silence*.....Lord of life.

All **Hear us in your love**

Collect Gracious God, you have made us in your own image and given us to one another. Hear our prayers, that unity may overcome division, and joy overwhelm despair; and enable through your Holy Spirit, to join N2 and N1 in that most excellent gift of love, to make and keep the solemn promises of marriage, through Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray.

All **Amen.**

THE ESPOUSAL / MARRIAGE THE WEDDING SONG

Following or another hymn or lyric may be sung here or transferred to after joining their hands before the Vows when a fire may be lit in front of the couple and symbolizes the presence of the Holy Spirit (Matt 3:11b , Acts 2:3, Exod 13:21-22) and as a witness to the marriage covenant (Gen 15:17-18) and also their offering to one another (Lev 2:9)

AUSTRIA 8 7. 8 7 D

Alfreeda De Silva, 1943

(Glorious thing of Thee are spoken)

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1807)

**God of love whose breath has kindled
In our hearts a holy flame,
And through every storm has kept it
Burning brightly just the same;
All the hours we live together,
Moons of joy or clouds of pain,
Bind us close and closer ever,
Steadfast, faithful, without stain.**

**Breathe on us, Oh Love Immortal,
Breathe on us, stretch forth Thine hand,
Bless this new and unknown pathway,
At whose gates we trembling stand.
Spread like stars Thine angels o'er us,
All our treasured dreams fulfill,
Scatter far all doubts and terrors,
Voice that uttered: "Peace, be still".**

**God of Grace, whose love has found us,
Keep us Thine through changing years,
Thine in joy and liling laughter,
Thine in grief, when ripe for tears,
Weave the fabric of contentment
On the loom of all our days,
Be thou strength of warp and pattern,
Prayer of faith, and hymn of praise.**

OR
(translation from Tamil)

**Oh God of boundless grace
Your only begotten you gave
As the eternal Word in this place
To us the eternal light you gave**

**In the name of the Holy Trinity
We gift our priceless affinity,
Our matchless wealth and joy,
Life breath, eye's apple, kids employ.**

**May they prosper, blessed be
Their generations to come.
Grant them the blessings be :
Content , pleasure, living and eternal home.**

All sit

*Bride and Bridegroom stand in the sight of the congregation.
Witnesses come forward and stand near the couple.*

Presbyter Who brings N1 and N2 to be married?
(to be answered by both sets of parents/guardians/friends)

OR

Who brings N2 to be married to N1?
(to be answered by the brides parents / guardians / friends)

Response by the parents : We do

*The bridegroom takes leave of his parents and the bride takes leave of hers.
The bridegroom greets the Bride's parents with a sheaf of betel leaves, a
traditional mark of respect, and then the presbyter takes the brides right
hand and places it in that of the bridegroom, and they both face each other.
The parents of both parties may pour baptismal covenant water over **the**
joined hands of their children symbolizing their offering and gifting .*

THE VOWS

When each vow is taken (before the fire of the Holy Spirit) a Minister may drop a betel leaf on the ground symbolic of this marriage being witnessed by God's created earth and by the generations of the ancestors of the couple now in paradise. The seven leaves dropped to the earth at this service symbolizes the creation of a new world by the couple and the wholeness that they cannot attain separately.

The couple takes their vows directly or may repeat after the presbyter:

Bridegroom: I, N1S, take you N2S, to be my wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part; according to God's holy law. In the presence of God I make this vow.

Bride: I, N2S, take you N1S, to be my husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part; according to God's holy law. In the presence of God I make this vow.

They loose hands.

The rings/ornaments/going away saree may be placed on the Holy Bible, symbolic of all things and belongings come from God, and the Presbyter says:

Parent God, by your blessing let + these rings/ thali/ necklace/ toe ring be to N1 and N2 symbols of unending love and faithfulness all their days, to remind them of the vow and covenant which they have made this day to bind themselves to each other and to share their possessions, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The ornaments may be taken to the midst of the congregation in a koorai tray to express their blessings with flowers or uplifted hands.

Bridegroom: N2, I give you this ring/thali as a sign of our marriage. With my body I honour you, all that I am I give to you, and all that I have I share with you, within the love of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Bride: N1, I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage. With my body I honour you, all that I am I give to you, and all that I have I share with you, within the love of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

(other ornaments may now be placed (necklace ,toe ring))

The Presbyter ties the small fingers of the couple with a gold thread (=purity) and then pours baptismal water over the fingers symbolizing the eternal unity of the couple and of the different Christian Churches in Holy Baptism (Eph. 4:5, Rom. 11:29) and in the local tradition of water and the earth on which it falls being eternal verities, a lasting witness to the marriage.

*The newly weds then pray **together**, saying:*

Lord Jesus Christ, help us to remember when we first met and the strong love that grew between us; to work that love into practical things so that nothing can divide us. We ask for words both kind and loving, and hearts always ready to ask forgiveness as well as to forgive. Dear Lord, we put our marriage humbly into your hands. **Amen.**

THE PROCLAMATION

Minister 2:

In the presence of God and of this congregation N1 and N2 have declared their love for each other and their hopes for the future by making promises to each other. The servants of God, N1 and N2 are now recognized as husband and wife, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The gold thread / chain is removed.

Listen O people of God, those whom God has joined together, let no one put asunder/separate. (Mk. 10:9)

THE NUPTIAL BLESSING / CROWNING

The Presbyter representing the Universal Church which witnessed the marriage, then pronounces the central act of the wedding service, as the couple kneels, binding their hands with a stole and anoints them. Another Minister may wave a crown or necklace over the heads of the couple(Sg.of Sgs 3:11)

May the love of God the **Creator** purify your love for each other and crown you with unity. May the **Redeemer** God's humanity keep you sensitive and practical, and crown and illuminate your way ahead; and may the **Comforter** God's energy and grace guide you to be faithful to your marriage vows as God blessed Abraham and Sarah, Esau and Rebecca, and Jacob and Rachel for a fulfilled and blessed life together, crowned in joy, tenderness and peace, till the end of your lives. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit bless, preserve and keep you; **Amen.**

Or

The traditional 16 Tamil Blessings

Or

**The adapted 7 Hebrew Benedictions
(see Supplementary Texts)**

The newly weds may garland each other and may then light a taper together from the two wicks lit by their families and then light a single lamp-symbolic of beginning of one family. In the Tamil custom three garlands are exchanged indicating their oneness of heart in the name of the Holy Trinity. Then the couple together may then seek a blessing from their parents, lights the lamp, and then turn to the congregation to greet them. Applause.

(A glass-Hebrew or coconut-Sinhala/Tamil may be broken)

THE CONGREGATION MAY JOYFULLY ACCLAIM THE COUPLE

THE BLESSING SONG

Mangala Gatha
Traditional tune

Adapted from
Vijay Vidyasagara

ALL:

ස්වර්ගික දුත ගණා සුන් - සිහසුන් අරා ගත්
පින් පුත් සුදන් යන නමින් - සිටි ලෝ සුරක්ෂා
ත්‍රිත්වෙක දේව තුමනා - වැජඹේ මුදුන්හි
ඒ තේජසින් ඔබ හටත් - සුර සෙත් ලැබේවා

කානාහි මංගල දිනේ - මිඳි පැන් නොමැත් වී
පෙම්වත් ඔවුන් සැදැහැනින් - එම පැන් සාදා දුන්
ප්‍රේමාතිප්‍රේම සුර පුත් - වැජඹේ මුදුන්හි
ඒ තේජසින් ඔබහටත් - දෙවි සෙත් ලැබේවා

සිත්පින් නොමැත් මරු දැලේ - බිඳුල සොහොන්ගැබ්
සිප් බවිහි ලා යළි නැඟී - මුළු ලෝ සැනැස්සු
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Translation.

The Lord over sits on high/by angels adored
By Father, Son, Spirit/ the world is protected
Now reigns the Triune God / in the highest heaven
May you by God's glory/ receive divine blessing.

In the marriage of Cana when / all the wine was over

*The newly weds offer a sheaf of betel leaves to God, symbolic of respect and offering, taken by the Presbyter and placed on the Holy Table.
Trays containing articles that signify fullness of life (eg:- Coconut, rice, fruits, flowers, milk) may be presented at the Holy Table by relatives and friends optionally.*

The bride and groom takes bread and wine to the Holy Table.

All Confederation Churches of Sri Lanka Clergy assemble at the Holy Table.

THE TAKING

Groom With this bread, fruit of human work

Bride And this grape wine, the cup of the eternal kingdom

All: **We shall remember Jesus.**

Bride & Bridegroom together

With these Gifts of God, taken again to God, to be signified and received as New Life

All **We shall remember Jesus**

(New Life is the local metaphor for the Jewish cultural metaphor of Body and Blood of Christ)

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

All continue to stand to pray (Mk. 11:25, Matt. 6:5, 1 Sam. 1:26)

Presider : The Lord is here

All: **God's Spirit is with us**

Presider: Lift up your hearts.

All: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Presider: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All: **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Presider: It is right and a good and joyful thing, always
and every where to give thanks to you,
Gracious Father, creator of heaven and earth.

And now we give you thanks because you
have made the union between Christ and the
Church a pattern for the marriage between
husband and wife. Today we give you thanks
for bringing N1 & N2 together and for the
promise of the Holy Spirit to be a guide to
them and us

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices
with angels and archangels and with all the
company of heaven, who for ever sing this
hymn to proclaim the glory of your name.

All: **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Congregation may raise a hand throughout the following continuing to stand.

On the very night that he was betrayed to
suffer death upon the cross for us, the Lord
Jesus took bread and when he had given
thanks to you almighty Father, he broke it and
gave it to his disciples saying: Take, eat, this is
my body which is given for you. Do this in
remembrance of me. In the same manner
after supper, he took the cup also, and after
giving thanks, he gave it to them saying: Drink,
all of you from this, for this is my blood of the

new covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Minister: Great is the mystery of faith

All: We proclaim your death, O Lord, and live by your resurrection, and await your coming again

(The congregation may raise a hand)

All CCC Clergy: And we entreat you most merciful God to hear us and send your All Holy Spirit on † us and on these your gifts, that they being blessed and hallowed by that life giving power, may be for us the New Life of your most dearly loved Son, to the end that we receiving the same may be sanctified and filled with your grace and heavenly blessing.

All Through Jesus Christ our Lord, + by whom and with whom and in whom in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honour and glory be to you almighty Father, world without end. Amen.

29

BREAKING OF BREAD

Presbyter The bread which we break is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?

All We being many are one bread, one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

(1Corinthians 10:16-17)

SHARING

Minister Let us now say the family prayer of all Christians as our Saviour Christ has taught u:

[25]

**Our Father in heaven
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen**

Presider: The gifts of God for the people of God

All:

- a. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world:
grant us peace**

Or

- b. Hosanna in the highest
blessed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest**

.....Silence.....

Presbyter Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb (*Rev. 19:9*)

Communicants **Lord, I am not worthy to have you come; but only speak the word and I will be healed.**
(*Cf. Matt. 8:8*)

ALL WHO ARE MOVED BY THE SPIRIT ARE INVITED BY JESUS TO RECEIVE NEWNESS OF LIFE IN COMMUNION WHICH IS THE CLIMAX OF THE SERVICE. (say on receiving **Amen**)

Communion Songs

An After – Communion prayer MAY be said (-see Appendix 6 Page 44)

(4) DISMISSAL

Presider God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love, defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGE – *During which hymns / Lyrics / a solo may be sung.*

Bride and Groom and the wedding party recess.

APPENDIX – SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS

(1) Alternate Exhortation & Declaration

Minister:

We have come together in the presence of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to witness the promises of N1S and N2S in marriage; to share with them in their happiness and in their hopes for the future.

Marriage is a gift of God our Creator, involving caring and giving, and to help each other through uncertainties and adversity. It involves learning to share one's life with another person, forgiving, as Christ forgives, and expecting risks and surprises as Christ did in the first sign at the wedding in Cana; enjoying the love and meaning which can be found together under the guidance of the All Holy Spirit. In marriage, husband and wife belong together, providing mutual support and a stability in which their children may grow. Marriage must not be undertaken lightly, selfishly or carelessly but reverently, responsibly, and after serious thought.

Here before God *N1* and *N2* wish to pledge their love for each other and their desire to spend their lives together.

N2S and *N1S*, we welcome you. We are glad to join with you in the celebration of your marriage, to witness your vows, to pray with you and to wish you joy in your life together in the community.

A short prayer MAY be said

Presbyter in charge: First I am required to ask anyone who knows a reason why these persons may not lawfully marry, to declare it now.

A Minister says to the couple:

N1S and N2S the law requires that if either of you may not be lawfully free to marry, you must declare it now.

A Minister says to the Bridegroom:

N1, do you love and trust N2 and do you wish to marry her, standing by her no matter what happens, respecting her as a person, understanding her needs, enjoying her love, and be faithful to her until death parts you?

Bridegroom: I do

A Minister says to the Bride:

N2, do you love and trust N1 and do you wish to marry him, standing by him no matter what happens, respecting him as a person, understanding his needs, enjoying his love, and be faithful to him until death parts you?

Bride: I do

(2) Alternate Vows

The Presbyter places the right hand of the bride in the right hand of the bridegroom.

(The vows may also be taken while the couple clasps both hands in each other)

Bridegroom: N2S today I N1S take you to be my wife. Whatever life may bring I will love and care for you as we both live. This I vow before God and Church.

Bride: N1S today I N2S take you to be my husband. Whatever life may bring I will love and care for you as we both live. This I vow before God and Church.

They lose hands

(3) Alternate giving of ornaments/rings *(Adapted from the Jewish)*

The Bridegroom and (Bride) places the ring(s) on the forefinger of the right hand of the other (and the Bridegroom places the Thali, necklace or toe ring on the Bride, and say to each other one after the other.

See, you are consecrated to me by this ring (and Thali, necklace, toe ring) that symbolizes the unending love, faithfulness and one life together sharing our worldly goods according to the law of the Church and of Sri Lanka, in the name of the ONE GOD: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

(4) Alternate Nuptial Blessings *(-Climax of the Marriage Service)*

After the Proclamation, the couple kneeling, and their right hands wrapped in a stole. The Presbyter may anoint the couple during the blessing.

(i) The Adapted 7 Hebrew Benedictions

Bride Blessed are you, Lord our God
God of love, creator of all things

All **Blessed be God forever.**

Bridegroom Blessed are you, Lord our God
You make us in your image and likeness

All **Blessed be God forever.**

Bride Blessed are you, Lord our God
You make man and woman to reflect your
glory

All **Blessed be God forever.**

Bridegroom Blessed are you, Lord our God
You create the fruit and promise us life

All **Blessed be God forever.**

Presbyter May N1 and N2 enjoy the blessing of your kingdom
Give them faith and joy in their marriage
Blessed are you, Lord our God
You give joy and gladness to the bride and groom

All **Blessed be God forever.**

Presbyter May their love be fruitful
And their home a place of peace.
Blessed are you, Lord our God
You make marriage a sign of your love

All **Blessed be God forever.**

Presbyter May they know the love of the Father,
The life of the Son,
And the joy of the Spirit.
Blessed are you, Lord our God
Lover, Beloved and Friend of Love.
Blessed are you Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Now and forever.

All **Blessed be God forever.**

(ii) The Traditional 16 Tamil Blessings of Life

Presbyter:

- (i) O The Triune God grant them Aesthetic gifts!**
- (ii) O The Triune God grant them Valour!**
- (iii) O The Triune God grant them Success!**
- (iv) O The Triune God grant them Virtuous Children!**
- (v) O The Triune God grant them Courage!**
- (vi) O The Triune God grant them Wealth!**

- (vii) O The Triune God grant them Rice!*
- (viii) O The Triune God grant them Happy Life!*
- (ix) O The Triune God grant them Joys of Life!*
- (x) O The Triune God grant them Wisdom!*
- (xi) O The Triune God grant them Beauty!*
- (xii) O The Triune God grant them New Achievements!*
- (xiii) O The Triune God grant them Righteous Life!*
- (xiv) O The Triune God grant them Family Fame!*
- (xv) O The Triune God grant them Health!*
- (xvi) O The Triune God grant them Long Life!*

God the Father

God the Son

God the Holy Spirit

Bless, preserve and keep you;

The Lord mercifully grant you the

Riches of that grace,

That you may please God both in body and soul,

That living together in faith and love,

May receive the blessings of eternal life.

Amen.

(iii) A Short Form

N2 and N1, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve and keep you; May God be your protection, your wisdom, your guide and your peace; the Lord mercifully grant you the riches of grace, that you may please God both in body and soul, And, living together in faith and love, may receive the blessings of eternal life.

Amen

(iv) A Western Form

Blessed are you, O Lord our God,
for you have created joy and gladness,

pleasure and delight, love, peace and fellowship.
Pour out the abundance of your blessing
upon N1 and N2 in their new life together.

Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts
and a crown upon their heads.
Bless them in their work and in their companionship;
awake and asleep, in joy and in sorrow, in life and in death
Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that banquet
where your saints feast forever in your heavenly home.
We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and forever.
All **Amen.**

God the Father,
God the Son,
God the Holy Spirit,
Bless, preserve and keep you;
The Lord mercifully grant you the riches of that grace,
Riches you may please Him both in body and soul,
That living together in faith and love,
May receive the blessings of eternal life.
All **Amen.**

(5) Holy Table Prayers

When there is no Holy Eucharist, that section in the main marriage service could be used for the Holy Table Prayers.

i) The prayers of the people in the main service or any intercessions or free prayer could be used for the Holy Table prayers after the Nuptial Blessing, ending with the Lord's Prayer and the dismissal.

The prayers usually include and follow the sequence:

- Thanksgiving

- Spiritual growth
- Faithfulness, joy, love, forgiveness and healing
- Children, other family members and friends
- The Lord's Prayer
- Blessing and Dismissal

(ii) *Minister:* Let us pray,
 Lord, save your servant and handmaid;
All: **And let them put their trust in you.**
Minister: O Lord, send help from your Holy Place;
All: **And evermore defend them.**
Minister: Be to them a tower of strength;
All: **From the face of the enemy.**

(These or some other prayers of intercession)

God of grace, source of all love,
 we pray for N2 and N1
 that they may live together in love and faithfulness
 to the end of their lives.

Lord of life,
***All:* Hear us in your love.**

Enrich their friendship,
 that each may be for the other
 a companion in joy and a comforter in sorrow.

Lord of life,
***All:* Hear us in your love.**

Help N1 and N2 to be patient, gentle and forgiving,
 that their marriage may reflect Christ's love for all people,

Lord of life,
***All:* Hear us in your love.**

Enable them to make their home
a place of welcome and friendship,
that their life together
may be a source of strength to others.

Lord of life,

All: Hear us in your love.

(Other intercessions maybe included)

May we, who have witnessed these vows today,
be signs of your love in the world;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

EITHER

We say together the prayer that Jesus gave us:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom,
The power and the glory
are yours now and forever. **Amen.**

OR

As our Saviour taught his disciples we pray:

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.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. **Amen.**

(iii) *All or part of the following prayer may be used.
There may be silence between sections.*

Eternal God, creator of us all,
we praise you for all the ways
in which your love comes into our lives,
and for all the joys that can come to men and women
through marriage.

Today we especially pray for N1 and N2
as they begin their married life.
With them we thank you for the love and care of their
parents which has guided them and prepared them for
this commitment.

Give them strength
to keep the vows they have made,
to be loyal and faithful to each other,
and to support each other throughout their life,
that they may bear each other's burdens
and share each other's joys.
Help them to be honest and patient with each other,
(*to be wise and loving parents*)

and to welcome both friends and strangers into their home.

In all their future together
may they enjoy each other
and grow through the love they share,
until, at the end of this life,
you receive us all into your eternal kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.
Amen.

(Other prayers may be offered, ending with the Lord's Prayer)

(6) Alternate Eucharistic / Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord is here
God's Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God
It is right to give God thanks and praise.

It is right to thank and praise you, Father, Lord of all creation; in your love you made us for yourself. When we turned away you did not reject us, but came to meet us in your Son. You embraced us as your children and welcomed us to sit and eat with you.

We thank you that you poured out the Holy Spirit on all flesh to reveal all things even your depths. And now we give you thanks because you have made the union between Christ and the Church a pattern for the marriage between husband and wife.

In Christ you shared our life that we might live in him and he in us.

He opened his arms of love upon the cross and made for all the perfect sacrifice for sin, once for all.

On the very night that he was betrayed to suffer death upon the cross for us, the Lord Jesus took bread and when he had given thanks to you Gracious Father, he broke it and gave it to the disciples saying: Take, eat, this is my body that is given for you, do this in remembrance of me. In the same manner after supper, he took the cup, and after giving thanks, he gave it to them saying: Drink, all of you from this, for this is my blood of the New Covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Great is the mystery of faith

We proclaim the Lord's death, we live by his resurrection and we look for his coming again.

As we proclaim his death and celebrate his rising in glory send your Holy Spirit that this bread and this wine may be to us the body and blood (*or New Life*) of your dear Son. As we eat and drink these holy gifts make us one in Christ, our risen Lord.

With your whole Church throughout the world we offer you this sacrifice of praise and lift our voice to join the eternal song of heaven:

**Holy, holy, holy, Lord,
God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

THE BREAKING OF BREAD

The bread which we break, is it not a sharing of the body of Christ?

We being many are one bread, one body, for we all partake of one bread.

(1 Corinthians 10: 16-17)

Let us say the prayer that makes us one.

The Lord's Prayer

Gifts of God for the people of God

Lamb of God

Silence

Taste and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:38)

Communion

(After Communion: Gracious God may N1 and N2 who have been bound together in these Holy Mysteries become one in body and soul. May we and they live in faithfulness and peace and obtain those eternal joys prepared for all who love you, who with your Son our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is ONE God, in the beginning, the middle and forever. **Amen.**)

Blessing & Dismissal

(7) Service of Blessing of a Civil Marriage (For Mixed Marriages and where the normal Solemnization is inappropriate)

Important Notes

1. The couple must be married before they come for the blessing. They should produce their marriage certificate to the officiating Minister in advance as evidence of their marriage. No entry is made in the church register.
2. They will need Pastoral care and Counselling before the Service of Blessing
3. It must be clearly stated on all invitations, hymn sheet etc. (all related printed material) and to the gathered community that this is a Service of Blessing and not a marriage.
4. Any cultural ceremonies may be included or excluded.
5. The Holy Eucharist may or may not be included in this Service.

GATHERING TOGETHER

Hymn/Lyric: (Entrance of Groom/Bride etc.)

The Presbyter speaks a word of welcome to the couple, the families and the Congregation gathered for the service of blessing, and shall mention that this is a Service of Blessing and not a Marriage Service.

Presbyter: + Homage to the One God, the Ultimate Reality- That You Are : The Creator, The Redeemer and the Energizer. Loving kindness to all. So be it as it is to peace that God has called you.

All: + Homage to the One God, the Ultimate Reality- That You Are : The Creator, The Redeemer The Energizer. Loving kindness to all. So be it

Presbyter: God is love, and those who live in love live in God: and God lives in them,
(1 John 4:16),

.....Silence.....

Exhortation of Marriage

Presbyter: We have come together in the presence of God to ask God to bless the marriage of N2 and N1 and to share their joy.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was a guest at a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and through the Holy Spirit the Holy Christ of God is here with us now. The Scriptures teach us that marriage is a gift from God in creation and a means of grace, a holy mystery in which man and woman become one flesh. It is God's purpose that, as husband and wife give themselves to each other in love throughout their lives, they shall be united in that love as Christ is united with humanity.(The Scriptures say that the

unbelieving partner is made holy through believing partner and their children made holy, as it is in peace).

Marriage is given, that husband and wife may comfort and help each other, living faithfully together in need and in plenty, in sorrow and in joy. It is given, that with delight and tenderness they may know each other in love, and through the joy of their bodily union, may strengthen the union of their hearts and lives. It is given; that they may have children and be blessed in caring for them and bringing them up in accordance with God's will, to his praise and glory.

In marriage husband and wife belong to one another, and they begin a new life together in the community. It is a way of life that all should honour; and it must not be undertaken carelessly, lightly, or selfishly but reverently, responsibly, and after serious thought.

This is the way of life created and hallowed by God on which (name N2 and name N1) now seek God's blessings. They will listen to God's word reaffirm their pledge to each other and in token of this will give and receive a ring.

The Presbyter shall then say a prayer

(1) MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Reading(s):

Homily:

Confession:

The Presbyter may drop 7 betal leaves on the ground during the confession and vows symbolic of wholeness of the couple together and as witnessed by their ancestors and mother earth created by God.

Presbyter: God the Ultimate Reality in our weakness you are our strength... Lord have loving kindness

All: **Lord have loving kindness**

Presbyter: Christ when we stumble you raise us up...
Christ have loving kindness

All: **Christ have loving kindness**

Presbyter: Holy Spirit when we fail you give us new life...
Lord have loving kindness

All: **Lord have loving kindness**

Presbyter: May God the Ultimate Reality forgive *you* your sin, grant *you* strength in weakness, and bring *you* to eternal life through our Redeemer and Sanctifier, **Amen**

A hymn of praise

(2) TRANSFORMATION

Vows

Husband: I N1S (name) acknowledge you N2S (name) to be my wife, to have and to hold from this day forward; for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death us do part and this is my solemn vow.

Wife: I N2S (name) acknowledge you N1S (name) to be my husband, to have and to hold from this day forward; for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death us do part and this is my solemn vow.

The blessing of the Rings/Thali may take place. The thali/necklace may be waved over the couple (Crowning in Indian orthodoxy)

Presbyter: The Ultimate Reality Named "I AM", by your blessings let these rings be to N1 (name) and N2 (name) a symbol of unending loving kindness and faithfulness all their lives, to remind them of the vow and covenant which they have made to bind themselves to each other and to share their possessions through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Husband: I give you this ring/thali/necklace/toe ring as a sign of our marriage. With my body I honour you, all that I am I give to you and all that I have I share with you from this day and forever.

Wife: I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage. With my body I honour you, all that I am I give

to you and all that I have I share with you from this day and forever.

**** if only one ring is used or only a thali is used**

Wife: I receive this ring/thali as a sign of our marriage with my body I honour you, all that I am I give to you and all that I have I share with you from this day and forever.

(The Presbyter may tie a gold thread round the small fingers of the couple and pour baptismal water over it, falling to the earth and before a fire of the holy spirit in a candle/lamp- water, fire and earth being eternal verities that witness the marriage.)

Presbyter: In the presence of God and before us all N2 (name) and N1 (name) have acknowledge their marriage to each other, by the giving and receiving of a ring(s). We therefore affirm and recognize N1 (name) and N2 (name) as husband and wife.

The Christian partner may say a prayer. The Presbyter may give a suitable nuptial blessing(-See Main Service or Supplementary Texts 5)

Hymn/Mangala Gatha

Additional Holy Table Prayers
(See also Supplementary Texts 6)

Presbyter: Loving God, we thank you that in our earthly lives you speak to us of life: we pray that

through their marriage N1 (name) and N2 (name) may come to know you more clearly, love you more dearly and follow you more nearly, day by day through Jesus Christ our Lord - Amen.

Almighty God, give to N1 (name) and N2 (name) the blessing of mutual understanding that they may know your presence and peace in their home; fill them with your love and use them for your glory through Jesus Christ our Lord – Amen.

God of mercy and loving kindness equip and strengthen N1 (name) and N2 (name) to face challenges and trials of family life. Give them a sense of awe and wonder at the gift of children; and grant them the commitment and courage to lead a harmonious life through Jesus Christ our Lord – Amen.

(3) DISMISSAL

Final Blessing: The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord: and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always – Amen.

**** *Or a suitable and creative blessing may be used***

Recess: