

## Christian Medieval Ceremony

*This is a popularized Medieval ceremony... It is a short version of the full, original text - for which some couples then add modern passages or readings to it. It also is shorter. The core sources are the Book of Common Prayer of HRM Elizabeth I of England, extracts from the Sarum Rite and the York Rite, and various other lesser sources.*

At the day and time appointed for solemnization of Matrimony, the persons to be married shall come into the porch of the Church with their friends and neighbors; and there standing together, the Man on the right hand, and the woman on the left, with that person who shall give the Woman betwixt them, the Priest shall say:

Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God to join together this Man and this Woman in holy Matrimony; which is an honorable estate, instituted of God in Paradise, and into which holy estate these two persons present come now to be joined.

Therefore if any man can show any just cause, why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace.

I require and charge you both, as ye will answer at the dreadful day of judgment when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, that if either of you know any impediment, why ye may not be lawfully joined together in Matrimony, that ye confess it. For ye be well assured, that so many as be coupled together otherwise than God's Word doth allow are not joined together by God; neither is their Matrimony lawful. At which day of Marriage, if any man do allege and declare any impediment, why they may not be coupled together in Matrimony, by God's Law, or the Laws of the Realm; and will be bound, and sufficient sureties with him, to the parties; or else put in a Caution (to the full value of such charges as the persons to be married do thereby sustain) to prove his allegation; then the solemnization must be deferred, until such time as the truth be tried. If no impediment be alleged, then shall the

Priest say unto the Man: Wilt the have this Woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony? Wilt the love her, comfort her, honor, and keep her, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?

The Man shall answer: I will.

Then shall the Priest say to the Woman: Wilt the have this man to be thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony? Wilt the obey him, and serve him, love, honor, and keep him in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?

The Woman shall answer: I will.

Thus ends the formal betrothal. The couple shall advance to the Altar, led by the Minister, who shall then turn to the assembled company, and say:

Who giveth this Woman to be married to this Man?

The person who gives the Woman shall answer, and shall place the Woman's right hand in the hand of

the Minister, and then shall retire. Then shall they give their troth to each other in this manner: The Minister, receiving the Woman at her father's or friend's hands, shall cause the Man with his right hand to take the Woman by her right hand, and to say after him as followeth,

GROOM' VOW: "I, \_\_\_\_\_, take thee \_\_\_\_\_ to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, for fairer or fouler, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us depart, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereunto I plight thee my troth.

Then shall they loose their hands; and the Woman, with her right hand taking the Man by his right hand, shall likewise say after the Minister,

BRIDE'S VOW: I \_\_\_\_\_ take thee \_\_\_\_\_ to my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, to be bonny and buxom at bed and at board, to love and to cherish, till death us depart, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereunto I plight thee my troth.

Then shall they again loose their hands; and the Man shall give unto the Woman a Ring, laying the same upon the Book with the accustomed duty to the Priest and Clerk. And the Priest shall bless the Ring(s) in the following manner:

Bless these Rings, O merciful Lord, that those who wear them, that give and receive them, may be ever faithful to one another, remain in your peace, and live and grow old together in your love, under their own vine and fig tree, and seeing their children's children. Amen.

And the Priest, taking the Ring, shall deliver it to the Man, to put it on the fourth finger of the Woman's left hand. And the Man holding the ring there, and taught by the Priest, shall say,

GROOM: With this Ring I thee wed, (here placing it upon her thumb) and with my body I thee honor, (here placing it upon her index finger) and with all my worldly goods I thee endow; (here placing it upon her ring finger) In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

If it be a double-ring ceremony, let the Woman do the same as the Man, giving him the ring, and repeating the same words as he. They both shall kneel down; and the Minister shall say,

Let us pray. O Eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Giver of all spiritual grace, the Author of everlasting life; Send thy blessing upon these thy servants, this man and this woman, whom we bless in thy Name; + that, as Isaac and Rebecca lived faithfully together, so these persons may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant betwixt them made, whereof this Ring given and received is a token and pledge, and may ever hereafter remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according to thy laws; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

And here shall be said the LORD'S Prayer.

Then shall the Priest join their right hands together, and say,

Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Then shall the Minister speak unto the people. Forasmuch as N and N have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have given and pledged their troth each to the other, and have

declared the same by giving and receiving of a Ring, and by joining of hands; I pronounce therefore that they be Man and Wife together, in the Name of the Father, + and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

The Minister shall add 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 so fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace, that ye may so live together in this life, that in the world to come ye may have life everlasting. Amen.

And here the Minister shall turn the couple to the Company, and they may kiss each the other, and then proceed from the Altar. And if it be the wish of the couple to take Communion, they may do it privately, following these ceremonies.