

# Holy Matrimony

The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony or marriage is the consecration of the union between a man and a woman for life in lawful marriage. By mutual accord of the man and the woman, they are united together with a spiritual bond to each other and to the Church.

By His attendance at the wedding of Cana in Galilee, Our Lord Jesus Christ demonstrated to us His approval of the sanctity of marriage. He gave us laws concerning marriage, which are recorded in *Matthew 19:3-12*. The doctrine of the sacrament of marriage is based on *Ephesians 5:22-33* which is read during the service as the main lesson.

The purpose of marriage is very sacred. In Matrimony, a man and his wife are called to take part in the work of the Creator. "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." *Ephesians 6:4*

Marriage is also instituted for the mutual support of man and woman. "Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." *Genesis 2:18*

As the ceremony begins the Priest blesses the rings, and the right hands of the bride and groom are joined, symbolizing their spiritual union. The rings are a symbol of their bond and perpetual faithfulness to each other. The bride and groom are asked three times whether they will be united to one another until the end of their lives, and are instructed by the priest to be faithful to one another.

Passages from Saint Paul's letter to the Ephesians (*Ephesians 5:22-33*) and the Gospel of Saint Matthew (*Matthew 19:3-12*) are read which tell of Jesus' teaching on marriage. A short creed of the Church is recited which tells of the events in Christ's life.

Following the reading, the Priest places crowns on the bride and groom's foreheads. The crowns are symbolic of the King and Queen of Armenia, Saints Trdat and Ashkhen, who, through Saint Gregory the Illuminator, proclaimed Christianity as the state religion in 301 A.D. The couple's



foreheads and right hands are joined together as a prayer is recited naming the Patriarchs of the Old Testament. The Godfather holds a Cross over the crowns, symbolizing the Christian interpretation of the reflective processes in their decision to marry and their intellectual union.

The crowns are then lifted and a cup of wine is blessed and given to the bride and groom, as well as the Godfather and maid of honor. The wine symbolizes the first miracle of Christ in Cana of Galilee where He transformed water into wine at a wedding so that it could be enjoyed by the guests.

## **Matthew 19**

**3** And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" **4** He answered, "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, **5** and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? **6** So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." **7** They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" **8** He said to them, "For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. **9** And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery." **10** The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry." **11** But he said to them, "Not all men can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. **12** For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it."

## **Ephesians 5**

**22** Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. **23** For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. **24** As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. **25** Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, **26** that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, **27** that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. **28** Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. **29** For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, **30** because we are members of his body. **31** "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." **32** This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church; **33** however, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.