

The Order of the Marriage Service in the Mar Thoma Syrian Church

The groom comes into the church and stands facing the Madbaha near the railing.

BRIDAL MARCH

Instrumental music.

The bride comes into the church accompanied by her father and stands on the right hand side of the groom, facing the Madbaha. A married sister or an aunt from the bride's side stands behind the bride.

OPENING HYMN

The choir sings.

The groom and the bride signs the Consent register. One person from the side of the groom and the bride signs as a witness.

PART - I

BLESSING OF THE RING (The Engagement)

Minister (M): Dearly beloved in Christ, Christian marriage is instituted by God and therefore it is holy and sacramental. You have come in the presence of God to be united in holy matrimony. The Lord has guided you until now and so you ought to remember His ways and praise His holy name. You should confess your sins with your whole heart and mind before the Lord. If you truly repent, He will forgive your sins. This service would be more blessed and meaningful, if you take part in it with that experience of forgiveness. Jesus Christ is the true bridegroom and the Church is the bride. He loved the Church and gave himself for her. We remember this ideal in the marriage service. Let us pray together for the grace of God, so that, through this married life, you may experience the love of God as revealed at the Cross even more and you may enter into a new fellowship with the Lord. May our Lord give you grace to lead an authentic Christian family life until the very last.

KAUMA (Adoration)

The congregation stands.

M: Glory to the Father, to the Son and the Holy Spirit.

CONGREGATION (C): As it was in the beginning, is now, and forever shall be. Amen.

M: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the Highest.

C: Blessed is He who has come and it is to come again in the Name of the Lord. Hosanna in the Highest.

M: Holy art thou, O God.

C: Holy art thou, Almighty Lord.

M: Holy art thou, Immortal Lord.

C: O thou that wast crucified for us † have mercy on us.
(Thrice)

The groom, bride and the congregation make the sign of the cross.

M: O Lord have mercy upon us.

C: O Lord have compassion and mercy upon us.

M: O Lord accept our prayers and worship and have mercy upon us.

C: Glory be to you, O God.

M: Glory be to you, Creator of all.

C: Glory be to you, our King the Messiah, for you have compassion on your sinful servants.

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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

M: O Lord, make us worthy of eternal joy in your presence. May our joy and happiness begin and end in you. Let our bodies and souls rejoice in you. Dispel our sorrows by your mercy and increase our virtues by your grace. Enrich our lives with your blessings and grant fulfilment to our bridegrooms and brides. Help us to rejoice with you in unfading joy with all the saints who have pleased you from the beginning, with the multitude of your holy ones and in the assembly of those whom you love. To you, O Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we offer praise and glory forever and ever.

C: Amen

The congregation sits down.

Chant

M: *Vanor bhoovasikaleyum- Santhoshippicha
Anandam aruliya deva- ennekkum sthothram.
Karunakaranam massih-aye- thal sevakaraye
Thirumun nilkkum koottathe- santhoshippikka.
Rakshaka valamkai neetti thirunamathil njangal
Pakshamai nalkum mothirangal-vazhtheedanamenee
Mothirathal sabha massihai kai- velikai theernal
Than Thirumeni thiruraktham- kaikondeedunnu.
Pithruputhra vishudhalmavam- three yekan
Vannyan Vanor bhoovasikal vanni- chaghoshi kkunnu.*

M: O Lord our God, may your peace that reconciled heaven and earth, depth and height, unite (*name*) and (*name*) in the bond of marriage. O God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - grant them perfect unity that they may love and accept each other with joy, all the days of their life.

C: Amen

DEACON (D): Stomen kalos (Syriac meaning 'Let us stand and attend').

C: Kurie eleison (*Greek meaning 'Lord have mercy'*).

PROMION (Preface)

M: Let us pray to the Lord for His grace and mercy.

C: Merciful Lord, have mercy and help us.

M: Help us, O Lord, continually to offer to you praise, adoration, worship, thanksgiving and glory. O Lord Messiah, heavenly bridegroom, you have chosen the daughter of the Gentiles as your Church and cleansed her from all defilement and transgression by your innocent and holy blood. You offered yourself as the Bridegroom and betrothed yourself to the earth-born Church, having redeemed her from bondage to all unclean spirits and set her free from all debts and sins. As we bless the rings of these your servants, we acknowledge that you are worthy of praise, honour and worship, now and all the days of our life.

C: Amen.

SEDRA (An array of prayers)

M: O Lord God, who are glorious beyond all human understanding, ever abundant in blessings and high above all evil, source of all divine grace and river of all goodness, you are the holy and eternal oil with which we are anointed, free from all suffering and death. You have ordained that, with the ring, the joy of men and women should be perfected and the happiness of those who are betrothed should be completed. Lord God, bless these rings which we your unworthy minister(s) joyfully bless. Lord, bless these rings, and with them turn what is accursed into O Lord, by your divine blessings bless these rings, even as you blessed the ring of your holy Church. May this bridegroom our son (*name*) and this bride our daughter (*name*), be filled and perfected in wisdom. Grant, O Lord, that by your grace their marriage may be free from all defilement and hateful things. Grant them abiding joy in this world and in the world to come. O Lord God, adorn them in every way throughout their life in this transitory world. May they be joyously drawn closer to your heavenly dwelling where all your angels and archangels rejoice ceaselessly. Lord, by your love, free this congregation from sin, hatred, defilement and error. May they be blessed and, standing in your presence, glorify and praise you, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever.

C: Amen.

M: O true Bridegroom, You who choose pure and virgin souls for Your wedding, grant that (*name*) and (*name*) who have agreed to be joined in marriage and have accepted You as the mediator of their marriage through us Your humble servants who stand in Your presence, may spread the sweet fragrance of virtuous deeds. Enable them to cultivate true love, concord, peace and inseparable unity between them. Strengthen them to enable each other to maintain purity of body and spirit. Help them to offer to You and to the Father and the Holy Spirit, praise and glory, now and forever.

C: Amen

The Minister takes the rings.

M: Eternal praise be to God - the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who graciously and abundantly blesses these rings.

C: Amen.

M: These rings are blessed in the name of the Father † and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit † for the fulfilment of the joy of the Children of the Holy Church. *Basmo dabo, udabero, wede ruho, hay quadish leolam olmeen Amen.*

C: Amen.

The minister puts one of the rings on the fourth finger of the right hand of the groom.

M: May our Lord Jesus Christ graciously stretch out His right hand to you. With this ring which is the token of your betrothal, may you obtain from Him grace, mercy and blessings. May blessings and goodness from the hand of Christ remain with you and protect you throughout your life.

Bridegroom and Congregation: Amen.

The Minister puts the other ring on the fourth finger of the right hand of the bride.

M: May our Lord Jesus Christ mystically stretch out His right hand to you. Accept this ring from the hand of this minister as from the hand of the holy apostles, as a sign of your betrothal. With peace and joy of body and spirit, may you offer praise and glory to Him, and to the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Bride and Congregation: Amen.

Prayer for the Groom and the Bride

M: May the Lord God, who through His Messiah fulfilled the joy of the holy Church, perfect with truth and goodness (*name*) and (*name*) who have come together to be married. May they receive heavenly blessings along with these rings. Clothe them with humility. Perfect their marriage with the rings of righteousness, as the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca was confirmed through gold ornaments. Cause the bridegroom to rejoice in his salvation and adorn the bride with treasures that do not grow old and perish. May God enable them always to maintain a good conscience, with gentleness more fragrant than roses. May God save them from the wicked and envious who pervert the human race and from the evil-minded who corrupt the purity of wedded life. May the Lord bestow upon them times of well-being and years of blessedness.

O Lord God, hear the prayers of us your weak and sinful servants who stand before your glorious presence, and grant to this couple happy days and the blessing of children. Enrich them with the wealth of virtuous deeds. Confirm them in true faith in you. Give them the grace to remain firm in that faith and to impart it to their children. Confer your goodness and benefits on all those who have come prepared for this marriage feast. Perfect the bridegroom and the bride with your victorious Cross. Shower your blessings upon us all, O God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever.

C: Amen

Chant

M: *Njanenuulla vaak dhatham
Janakam pakkal ninnee-bhagyam
Raja suthan enikkai nalkee
Sarvam enikkai thanneedunnu.
Ethinal avene vanni-kkunnen
Vigraha bhakti cuhthi-chenne.
Kashttam vanchakanam dhushtannu
Rakshakenam yesoye sthothram.
Yogyadha thannavanen bhagyam*

*Snanathal visudha-tmente.
Aayudhom yenne charthee thaan
Mamsom raktham mothiramai
Ittuthannan viralinmel
Manavalan thaan suriya-noppam
Manavattee pakalodu thuliyam
Parimala vrikshatho-dangane
Virunna sakalavum thuliyam.*

BLESSING

M: You believers, who have come together to be witnesses of this sacrament, may the Lord bless you. May He reward your labors thirty, sixty and a hundredfold. May the Cross † of Christ remain with you day and night and ever protect you from the Evil One and his hosts.

C: Amen.

SERMON

PART - II

THE HOLY MATRIMONY

HYMN

The choir sings.

M: *Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.*

C: Weak and sinful as we are, shower upon us your blessings and mercies, in this world and in the world to come, now and forever. Amen.

M: *O Lord, make us worthy of the everlasting marriage feast and of the imperishable bridal chamber. Invite us also to your eternal joys with those invited to the fellowship of that wedding feast. Grant that together with them and among them we may praise and glorify you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever.*

C: Amen.

Chant

The minister blesses the groom and bride with the sign of the cross.

M: *Poorva vishudhare vazhthiya sarve-san
Bahula matham than Kripayaal yevare † vazhthatte*

The groom and the bride make the sign of the cross.

C: *Deva krupa cheyyaname nee*

M: *Aadam hawah yennivare vazhthiya sarve-san*

Bahula matham than Kripayaal yevare † vazhthatte

The groom and the bride make the sign of the cross.

C: *Deva krupa cheyyaname nee*

M: *Abraa'm Sara yennivare vazthiya sarve-san
Bahula matham than Kripayaal yevare † vazhthatte*

The groom and the bride make the sign of the cross.

C: *Deva krupa cheyyaname nee*

M: *Isahaak Rabukka yennivare vazthiya sarve-san
Bahula matham than Kripayaal yevare † vazhthatte*

The groom and the bride make the sign of the cross.

C: *Deva krupa cheyyaname nee*

M: *Yakob Raahel yennivare vazthiya sarve-san
Bahula matham than Kripayaal yevare † vazhthatte*

The groom and the bride make the sign of the cross.

C: *Deva krupa cheyyaname nee*

M: *Mezrenil Yowseppine yennivare vazthiya sarve-san
Bahula matham than Kripayaal yevare † vazhthatte*

The groom and the bride make the sign of the cross.

C: *Deva krupa cheyyaname nee*

M: Lord, exalt with the plenitude of your gifts, these your children (*name*) and (*name*) - who have been united together, and grant them joy. Fill them with joy in your divine status. Grant, O God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit – that they sing praises to you in joy and gladness, and rejoice eternally in your presence.

C: Amen.

Chant

M: *Karthane rajan nin balathil
Santhoshikum Halleluyah-oo-halleluyah
Thave rakshayil avane-ttam mothikkum*

C: *Nanmayin anugraham munpidunnavane nee
Halleluyah-oo-halleluyah
Maanyamam mudithan sirassil chootunnu-Barekmor*

PROMION (Preface)

M: Let us pray to the Lord for his grace and mercy.

C: Merciful Lord, have mercy and help us.

M: Help us, O Lord, continually to offer to you praise, adoration, worship, thanksgiving and glory. Praise to the eternal and self-existent One who is and who shall be the same from generation to generation, the eternal Word around whose throne the angels throng to offer worship and adoration, the glorious and exalted One who has graciously turned our race to him and the Holy One who freely gives crowns of joy to bridegroom and bride. As we bless the crowns of your servants, you are worthy of our praise, honour and worship, now and throughout our life.

C: Amen

SEDRA (An array of prayers)

M: O Lord, you are glorified by all the heavenly hosts with fear and trembling; the glorious hosts shudder and tremble at your majesty. Yet out of your inexplicable mercy and inestimable grace you delight in the praise of us mortals. Bless your servants everywhere upon earth, all those who are subjects of your divine majesty, and especially those who have come here and sought protection under the merciful shadow of your gracious wings. Keep them in health and happiness that they may be perfect in all good works. Grant them the grace to run the straight race that leads to the Kingdom of Heaven, perfected in all spiritual gifts and enriched by the godly discipline of their bodies and souls. Enable them, O Lord, to love eternal life and keep them from the corruption of sin. Unite them and keep them at your side, free from the bondage of accursed Satan. Make them and us to be faithful workers in your vineyard and help us to observe your commandments with zeal and true devotion. Make us one in the company of your saints, loving one another, hating the evil one, and obedient to your divine majesty. Make us to rejoice in your heavenly Kingdom. We offer praise and glory to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit because you are good and love mankind.

C: Amen

Chant

M: *Jathiyin Puthri neeye sundari-bahu sundari
Slemon rajan thiru sabha yam ninne varni-kkunnu
The-n kattakal nin-adharam pozhikkunnu
Angikal sugandhi-neesan kusumum pole
Sundari sabhaye ninnil maalin yam ille-thume
Msihahrajan than kurissa-I ninne katheedunnu
Halleluyah-oo-Halleluyah-Barekmor
Pithruputhra vishuthalmanu sthuthree-Halleluyah
Jathiyin Puthri neeye sundari-bahu sundari
Akhilanthathil suryanu sadrisya nee yagunnu
Ninte nettimel sleeba yin mudraa
Vishudhamam nin vaya-sthothram pa-dunnu
Thiru rakthathal ninnude chundellam chuvanna thatre
Thava praja ra-ppakal sthothram sannidhiyil padeedunnu
Halleluyah-oo-Halleluyah
Naadha anugrahichhengale thunakkename*

D: From the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians

C: Praise to you, O Lord of the Apostles. O Lord, grant us grace to discern your Word.

The Deacon reads Ephesians 5:20-28

D: *Submit yourselves to one another because of your reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband has authority over his wife just as Christ has authority over the Church; and Christ is himself the Saviour of the Church, his body. And so wives must submit completely to their husbands just as the Church submits itself to Christ. Husbands love your wives just as Christ loved the Church and gave his life for it. He did this to dedicate the Church to God by His Word, after making it clean by washing it in water. In order to present the Church to himself in all its beauty - pure and faultless, without spot or wrinkle or any other imperfection. Men ought to love their wives just as they love their own bodies. A man who loves his wife loves himself.*

D: Brethren, Let us stand in silence and reverence and listen to the proclamation of the Living Word of God from the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Congregation stands.

M: Peace be with you all †

Congregation makes the sign of the cross.

C: May the Lord make us all worthy to listen to His Word.

M: *The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, which proclaims life and salvation to the world, as recorded by Apostle Matthew.*

C: Blessed is He that has come and will come again. Praise to the Father who sent Him for our salvation. May His blessings be ever upon us.

M: *In the days of Jesus the Christ, our Lord and Saviour, God incarnate of the Blessed Virgin Mary, He taught in this manner.*

C: So we believe and affirm.

The minister joins the right hand of the groom and the bride for the reading of the Gospel.

The Minister reads St. Matthew 19:1-6

M: *When Jesus finished saying these things, He left Galilee and went to the territory of Judea on the other side of the River Jordan. Large crowds followed Him, and He healed them there. Some Pharisees came to Him and tried to trap Him by asking, "Does our Law allow a man to divorce his wife for whatever reason he wishes?" Jesus answered, "Haven't you read the scripture that says that in the beginning the Creator made people male and female? And God said, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife. And the two will become one. So they are no longer two, but one. Man must not separate then, what God has joined together."*

M: Peace be with you all †

The groom, bride and the congregation make the sign of the cross.

C: And also with you.

The congregation sits down.

The Minister blesses the Crowns.

M: *These Crowns and the heads that are crowned are blessed and perfected in the name of the Father † and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit †*

The Minister elevates the Crown three times over the head of the groom.

M: *Vaanil ninooru makudam*

*Karthanil ninni-ngerangi
Manavalan sirassinmel
Kahana choottee dunnu (3)*

C: *Nadha karunnyathaal
Kahanenmar semsa-nen maar
Dhambathi kaleyum-mudiyal
Manavarayil-santhoshi-ppikka*

M: *Vaanil ninooru makudam
Karthanil ninni-ngerangi
Manavalan sirassinmel
Kahana choottee dunnu (3)*

C: *Anugra ham niranjo-ru valankai
Evarmel ava-ippichu
Dampathikaleyum-sirassin
Mudiyeyum vazhthee-daname.*

The Minister places the Crown on the groom's head.

M: *May the Lord adorn you with the crown of righteousness. May the Lord arm you against all the powers of the enemy.*

C: Amen.

The Minister elevates the Crown three times over the head of the bride.

M: *Vaanil ninooru makudam
Karthanil ninni-ngerangi
Manavattisirassinmel
Kahana choottee dunnu (3)*

C: *Nadha karunnyathaal
Kahanenmar semsa-nen maar
Dhambathi kaleyum-mudiyal
Manavarayil-santhoshi-ppikka*

M: *Vaanil ninooru makudam
Karthanil ninni-ngerangi
Manavattisirassinmel
Kahana choottee dunnu (3)*

C: *Rakshakan neethiyin mudiye
Ningalkai mudanje-datte
Pithru puthra vishudhalmannu
Sthothram paadiduv*

M: *Vaanil ninooru makudam
Karthanil ninni-ngerangi
Manavattisirassinmel
Kahana choottee dunnu (3)*

The minister places the Crown on the bride's head.

M: *May the Lord crown you with the crown of righteousness and with desirable and imperishable adornment. May you rejoice all your life offering praise to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

C: Amen

The minister blesses the bridegroom and the bride.

M: May the Lord, who delights in human life, be pleased with your lives and bless your union. May Christ our heavenly bridegroom seal your marriage with the true seal of His love. As Christ rejoices in His Church may you rejoice in each other. May the right hand of blessing be on you and protect you from all troubles. May the angel of peace be with you and keep you from all jealousies that lead to destruction. May He take away all sorrows from you and fill you with joy in each other. As Abraham rejoiced in Isaac, Isaac in Jacob, and Jacob in Joseph, may the Lord bless you with righteous children so that you may rejoice in them. May the blessing that God gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob dwell with you. May God grant you dew from heaven and all the good things that the earth produces. May the blessing by which Jacob blessed his son Joseph be upon you. May the blessing promised to those who love the Lord and please His holy will be upon you and upon the crowns placed on your heads by the priest's hands. Let the nations rejoice and sing praises, for the Lord's name has been invoked upon you. May God enrich you with all prosperity, wealth and blessings. May He forgive all your sins. May you also inherit the kingdom of Heaven like the thief on the cross. May the Most High God who descended on Mount Sinai to make a covenant with the bride He had called out of Egypt, bless you and this congregation. Let us offer praises to the Lord of heaven and earth, now and forever more.

C: Amen

The groom then stands behind the bride. The minister places the Minnu with the strand on the bride's neck and the groom ties the strand. The groom ties the strand by placing the edge of the right strand on the top of the edge of the left strand. He then takes the right strand edge under the left strand and brings it back up. The edge of the right strand is once again placed over the edge of the left strand and then is taken under the left strand to form the knot.

The groom drapes the Mantrakodi (wedding saree) over the bride's head.

The married sister or the aunt from the bride's side who stood behind the bride now goes back to the pew. A married sister or an aunt from the groom's side then comes and stands behind the bride.

During this time the following is chanted:

M: *Yeden thottathin udaya vane
Yenne velkkuvan vannavan nee.
Elam kattathu kondu po-ka
Ullasam yenikavi deyunde
Karthane yenne velikai nee
Nizchaicha manaav-ttiyay jaan
Vishudhanam sathya manavala
Karuna chaikennil saranam neeye
Kurusinal koduthen sthreedhanavum
Kashtta paa-dal swathandrathayum
Yenmana vara unnathathil
Nin vaka yai vi/ichenne nee
Kallanmar yente soundaryathe
Kollachaivan mo-hichethirthu
Thiru snehathal methichavare
Adimayi! ninnu jan swathandra yai.*

The groom comes back to his earlier place next to the bride.

*De-va sudane valamkai neeti Vazthee-
daname nee † (The groom and bride make the sign of the cross.)
Manavallaneyum manavattiyeyum Sirasin
mudi ye-yum nee
Vazhtuka nadha dambathikaleyum † (The groom and bride make the sign of the cross.)
Avaravarna-mathil nee
Vazhtuka evarinjeevethakalam Velivin lake-nee*

*Eeninjanavum yenna nekkum Vazha-
ppedenam † (The groom and bride make the sign of the cross.)
Vaztheedaname nee yehapa lake
Vazhvalivare-nee
Vazhteeduka † (The groom and bride make the sign of the cross.)
nin adiyar vaikalin Stuthiyenadha nee
Vazhteeduka veennkalal nine Vandanam
chaithee-duvan*

HOOTHAMA (Concluding prayer)

M: Dearly beloved, we have a custom received from our Holy Fathers and entrusted to us by our revered predecessors of exhorting the believers as we are all assembled in the House of God. We must firmly bid (*name*) and (*name*) standing before us that they should be diligent in truth and justice and zealous in all good works.

Now, dear (*name*) and (*name*) remember that you stand before God's Holy Altar, before the throne of our Lord Jesus Christ and his Holy Table, before the Cross, before the Holy Gospel, before the congregation, and in the presence of God who knows the thoughts of every heart. From this time onwards we have united you to each other. May God be the Judge between you and me. I shall be free from blame for anything you do contrary to the divine law.

May God's mercy and blessing be upon the priests, the deacons, the believers, the bridegroom and the bride, the guests and the hosts. May the right hand of our Lord Jesus Christ be upon us all forever.

C: Amen.

EXHORTATION TO ALL

M: Once again, believers know that this commandment is to you all, that each husband among you should always keep in mind the right relationship he owes his wife. For she has left all her kindred to join her husband. Therefore he must love and cherish her. He must clothe her even if he has to go naked, feed her even if he has to go hungry, and give her to drink even if he is thirsty. Each wife also must behave towards her husband in the same manner as he does towards her and honour him accordingly. She must treat him with love and affection in all things. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be upon you forever.

C: Amen.

EXHORTATION TO COUPLE

M: Dear (*name*) and (*name*), God has united you as husband and wife from this day. You are no longer two but one. Christian family life is a great privilege and a big responsibility. So love one another, respect each other, be tolerant, be forgiving, hate evil, hold on to all that is good, be patient in tribulation, be constant in family prayer, be diligent in studying the Word of God, practice charity and hospitality, do always what is noble in the sight of all, be active participants in corporate worship and regular partakers of Holy Communion.

Remember that you are stewards of God in wealth, time and talents. Therefore set apart a portion of your income for the needy and the poor and for the Mission of the Church. When you are blessed with children, nurture them with the love of God. May God help you to rejoice in such a blessed Christian family life.

Bridegroom and Bride: Amen

BLESSING

M: You are blessed by the Lord who created heaven and earth. May the Lord bless and sanctify all of you who have attended this divine service with us. May † God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, hear and accept our weak and inadequate prayers before His throne of grace.

The newlyweds and the congregation make the sign of the cross.

C: Amen

SIGNING OF THE MARRIAGE REGISTER

The newlyweds sign the Marriage Register and give the offering. One person from the side of the groom and the bride signs as a witness.

The minister introduces Mr. and Mrs. (name) to the congregation.

Opportunity for photographs with the minister.

THE WEDDING MARCH

The choir sings.

The newlyweds walk through the aisle to the exit opposite the Madbaha.

The congregation stands.