



THE OFFICE OF
CROWNING

THE
WEDDING
SERVICE

The Order of Crow



- In Byzantine Churches, the Wedding Service is called the Crowning Service
- because the couple are wedded when the priest blesses them with Crowns
- the couple are Crowned in the Christ

The Holy Mystery of Crowning



- The Holy Mystery of Holy Crowning **MUST** be administered by a **PRIEST**.
- Crownings are celebrate on **SUNDAY**
- Crowning are not celebrated during the Great Fast.

Mysterion

- Marriage is a Sacrament/Mysterion
- In Meeting Christ,
- Christ becomes part of our lives
- The Meeting changes everything
- Our souls are saved
- We are healed
- We become disciples & Apostles

In the Sacrament of Crowning:

By the Power intrinsic
to the Liturgical
Sacrament

- We are transported back and have a double wedding with the couple in Cana
- Christ becomes present at our Wedding
- And what he did then, he does now!



The Office of Crowning: 2.5 parts

- a: the Blessing of Parents
 - (outside Church)
 - Not part of the Liturgy, a Ukrainian Tradition
- 1: **Betrothal with Rings**: (narthex)
 - the natural union
- 2: **Crowning Rite**: (sanctuary)
 - Sacramental Mysterion

PART a – the Blessing of Parents

- **Couple are blessed by their parents.**
 - Their own
 - Their in-laws
 - Kneeling on rushnyks before parents
- **Marriage Icons: presented & venerated.**
 - Pantocrator (Groom's parents) & Hodegetria (or similar) (Bride's parents)

Betrothal *(in the Narthex)*

- Betrothal Prayers
- Rings
 - a sign of God's betrothing them
 - Prayer of the Rings
- Procession in to the Sanctuary
 - Processional Psalm
- Consent

Crowning *(in the Sanctuary)*

- Introductory Rite
 - Blessed be the Kingdom of Triune God
 - Great Litany of the Marriage
- The **Crowning**
- Liturgy of the Word
- **Common Cup**
- **Dance of Isaiah** (Procession 2)

PART II – THE BETROTHAL:

- **The Wedding Party enters the narthex. By the Rite of Betrothal, the Couple are betrothed to each other as Christ betrothed the Church to Himself.**
- **The Couple arrive freely to give themselves to each other.**
- **The Bride is not walked down the aisle by her owner, her father, to be given over to the ownership of her husband.**

Transition from earthly to heavenly

- The Betrothal Service is the “natural” or “civil” or “earthly” aspect of the wedding
- But a civil/natural marriage is not enough for those who have died to this world and whose lives are hidden with Christ in God.
- The earthly Service is done in the narthex (which represents the world unredeemed).

Transition from Narthex to Sanctuary

- Priest leads the couple into the Church, i.e. the Sanctuary (the place of the Redeemed)
- there the “water” of their earthly union is transformed into the “wine” of that union of the Mystery of Christ & the Church (Eph. 5:32)
- like Baptism, the catechumen is baptised in the Narthex & after baptised is lead by the Priest into the Sanctuary

Betrothal Prayer 1:

- **Eternal God.**
- **You gather the Separate into One, and make the bond of love unbreakable.**
- **You blessed Isaac and Rebecca and marked them as heirs of your Promise.**
- **Bless also these servants of yours (NN) and (NN) and guide them in good works of every kind.**

Betrothal Prayer 2:

- **You betrothed the Church, a pure virgin called from among the nations:**
- **Bless this betrothal.**
- **Join together these servants of yours and keep them in peace and concord...**

Rings are given

- The sign of betrothal is the Rings
- --which are blessed and exchanged in the Name of the Trinity

Betrothal Prayer 3:

*traces God using the Ring
to bring union & fidelity to couples*

- **“O Master, with heavenly blessing,
Bless this putting on of Rings...**
- **Sustain them with the Holy Union
that comes from you, for You made
them male & female and you are the
One who matches Wife to
Husband...”**

By a Ring:

- power was given to Joseph in Egypt.
- Daniel was exalted in the land of Babylon.
- Tamar's innocence was proven.
- our heavenly Father showed compassion for his (prodigal) son, for he said:
- "Put a ring on his right hand, kill the fatted calf and let us eat & celebrate."

Processional Hymn: Psalm 127:

- **The Couple are led into the Sanctuary of the Temple,**
 - **the Holy Place of the Lord.**
 - **Where the Redeemed Pray**
- **Declaration of Consent:**
 - **With this the couple have committed their lives together in marital union as instituted at Creation according to the natural order.**

Processional Hymn: Psalm 127:

- --those fear the Lord and walk in the path of the Lord
- --will eat the fruit of their labour
- --will be happy
- --will have well-being
- --extols their wife and children
- --the Lord will bless and they will see the good
- Rx: Glory to You our God, Glory to You.

Procession 1: Narthex-Sanctuary

- the Priest holding high the Holy Cross
- Leads the couple to follow the Cross
- in Sacred Procession
- from the Narthex into the Sanctuary
- leading them from earthly union into the Kingdom of God.
- **the Couple leave the natural order
the transcend to the realm of the
Spirit.**

In the Sanctuary

- **In the Sanctuary**
- **the union according to the natural order is**
- **transfigured into a sacramental Mysterion,**
- **whereby God sacramentally unites the Couple into One &**
- **the Couple uniting together are sacramentally united to the Triune God.**

Consent & Candles

- Declaration of Consent
- Lighted Candles are presented to the couple (cf. Baptism & Pascha)

PART 2: the Rite of CROWNING:

- **Prayers & Litanies:**
- **The Great Litany of Crowning:**
-
- **Then, "To You, O Lord." and "Amen."**
-

PART 2: the Rite of CROWNING:

- **INITIAL INVOCATION:**
- **Blessed be the Kingdom**
 - (destination of the Mrg and Spouses)
- **Of the Father & of the Son & of the Holy Spirit**
- **Both now**
- **And ever**
- **And for Ages of Ages**
- usually only for Divine Liturgy, Baptism

The Great Litany of Crowning:

- Asking the Lord:
- --to be present, as at Cana
- --grant salvation
- --children
- --blamelessness
- --gladness
- Etc.

The 3 Great Prayers of Crowning:

- explain the theology of marriage
- --God is the source of Mrg
- --Mrg is a source of blessing

Old Covenant great promises

- Abraham are fulfilled through human love in the marriages of
- Abraham & Sarah,
- Isaac & Rebecca,
- Jacob and Rachel,
- Joseph & Asenath,
- Moses & Zipporah, etc. etc.
- reaching its zenith in Zachariah & Elizabeth who bore John the Baptist and Joachim and Anna who bore the Theotokos, whose virgin birth ushers in the new creation

Rite of CROWNING: the Essence

- God Himself is the Holy Celebrant of the mystical, pure marriage
- Prt/Pple: "Lord our God Crown them with Glory and Honour!"
- The Sacrament is "confectured" by the Priest's blessing in Crowning the couple in the Name of the Trinity (not by the Vows of the couple).
 - In the Byz. rite, the wedding is invalid without the priest's blessing, not a deacon, not the couple themselves.

- Jeweled, Gold, or Floral Crowns (Stephanos)
- are placed on the heads of the couple 3x.
- The invocation is chanted 3x: O Lord our God, crown them with glory and honour!
- (the meaning of Sacramental Crowning is explained in the special Processional Tropars sung later)

Crown = Royalty

- The Wedding Crowns represent **both** Royalty and Martyrdom.
- by the Mystic Sacrament the couple are made to be ***Kings/Queens to co-reign with Christ in the Kingdom***
 - Revelation: the saints cast their **crowns** before the Lamb
- by the Marriage Christ's Presence is carried into the world for its salvation

The Crowns = Martyrdom

- the mrg is to give witness (martyrizein) to God's love and salvation--even to the point of death
- death to sin and self and the world by self-sacrificing love (beginning with the asceticism of mrg)
- for in martyrdom the saints gain their everlasting Crowns of victory!
- because they partake of the Passion and Crucifixion of the Christ so to reign with Him forever

Liturgy of the Word

The PROKIMEN Psalm: (t. 8)

- You have placed upon their heads crowns of precious stones; they have asked You to give them life and You did so!
- verse: Yes, You will give them everlasting blessings, You will gladden them with the joy of Your presence.

The Apostle Reading:

- Reading from Ephesians 5: 20-33
- --submit to Christ
- --submit to each other
- --submit especially in those areas of our gender's passions
- where each gender is most vulnerable & each can find either salvation or destruction

The Gospel Reading:

- Reading from John (Wedding at Cana)
- --Jesus was present!
- --reference to His Hour (Soteriological and Escatological)
- --do whatever He tells you.
- --What is your Relationship with Me?
- --the Water was changed into Wine!

The Insistent Litany

- Litany of Supplication:
- --Christ will dwell in the home of the Spouses
- --Christ will minister to them and they in turn minister to others!
- -- they find joy and satisfaction in all their endeavours and that the temptations of earthly glory never blind them, but rather, that their earnest desire always be the riches awaiting them in the life to come

The Litany of Supplication:

- Christ will
- dwell in the home of the Spouses
- minister to them and they in turn minister to others!
- they find joy and satisfaction in all their endeavours and that the temptations of earthly glory never blind them, but rather, that their earnest desire always be the riches awaiting them in the life to come

• -- this wedding day may bring renewed

The Litany of Supplication: 2

- -- now keep them in peace and concord.
- Prove their marriage honourable,
- preserve their bed undefiled,
- let their life together remain without blemish and find them worthy of reaching a fruitful old age --as, with a pure heart, they do whatever You command

- **Prayer of Bowing:**
- --couple bow their head touching each other
- -- crowned in the community of marriage (the Holy Communion of Mrg)

The Common Cup:

- From ancient Jewish ritual
- = acceptance/ratification of covenant
- Is the invocation/sealing of the blessing
 - Here upon the marriage & the couple
- In hebrew called “kiddush”
 - sanctification
- Like signing a contract
 - Commits the parties to the relationship
 - Creates the relationship

The Isaiah Dance Procession:

- --the Priest holding high **the Cross**
 - lead (the Cross actually leads, they are following the Cross)
- Couples **hands bound**
 - by a special cloth & Epitrakhil of Priest
- Process, **circle 3x**, round the Gospel
 - like at Baptism and Ordination
 - procession symbolizes journey and pilgrimage together to the Kingdom following the Cross of Christ and centred on the Gospel.

The Dance of Isaiah Procession

- Dance, Isaiah!*
- A Virgin has conceived,*
- and will bear a Son, Emmanuel.*
- who is God and Man.*
- His name is "Orient."*
- When we extol Him*
- we call that Virgin blessed.

Dance of Isaiah

- Isaiah's prophecy re
- Salvation via
- Incarnation of God in the God-Man, Jesus
- Who is present at the wedding & marriage
- To sanctify it and divinize the couple
- Marriage is how Christ will save the couple
- Marriage is how Christ will use the couple to save others

O Holy Martyrs

- O holy Martyrs,* you fought well and have received your crowns.* On our behalf entreat the Lord* to have mercy on our souls!....
- Glory to You, O Christ God!* The Apostles' boast, the Martyrs' joy!* They whose preaching* was the Trinity – One in Being!

Meaning of Crowns:

- Couple participate in Christ's Kingship
- Couple participate in Christ's Martyrdom
- --witnessing to God's Love & Salv.
- --by self-sacrificing love
- Thus receiving Crowns of the Saints & Martyrs

The Rite of Removing the Crowns

- at Sunday Liturgy after the couple returns to their parish
- Sometimes done at end of Service

- Bridegroom! Be exalted like Abraham, blessed like Isaac and multiplied like Jacob, walking in peace and righteously doing God's commandments!
- And you, O bride! Be exalted like Sarah, gladdened like Rebecca and multiplied like Rachel, being happy with your husband and keeping the precepts of the Law. Do this and you will please God.

Final PRAYER

- God, You went to **Cana in Galilee** & blessed the marriage there....
- Bless Your servants joined together by Your providence in the **communion** of marriage. Bless their comings and goings, give their life a great store of good things and **receive their crowns in Your kingdom**, keeping them without spot or stain or reproach...

Nuptial Blessing

- May...the all-holy Trinity, One in Being, the Source of life, one Godhead and one Kingship,
bless you and give you ***long life, fine children, success in life and Faith, a great store of the good things of this earth***
and find you worthy of receiving as well the good things which have been promised.

DISMISSAL:

- **More honourable than the cherubim,* and by far, more glorious than the seraphim,* ever a virgin, You gave birth to God the Word,* O true Mother of God, we magnify you!....**
- **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,* now and for ever and ever. Amen.* Lord, have mercy. (3x)* Give the blessing!....**

Dismissal Blessing:

- May Christ our true God, who proved marriage honourable by His presence in Cana of Galilee,
- through the prayers of His most pure Mother, of the holy and ever-honoured Apostles,
- of the holy divinely-crowned sovereigns and equals-to-the-apostles, Constantine and Helen,
- of the holy great-martyr Procopius, and through the prayers of all the saints, have mercy on us and save us, for he is good and the lover of mankind.
- All: Amen.

- **God, grant you many years, many happy years! (2x) May you be blessed with health and salvation!**
God, grant you many happy years!

- **O Lord bless our family**
- **our loved ones far and near;**
- **the elders, the children**
- **the Couple standing here;**
- **May peace, love, and laughter,**
- **be ours forever after**
- **O Lord for this we pray,**
- **on this wedding day.**

