

An Order for Prayer and Dedication after a Civil Marriage

For Notes, see below.

Introduction

A hymn may be sung.

The minister may welcome the people and then says:

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Preface

N and **N**, you stand in the presence of God as man and wife to dedicate to him your life together, that he may consecrate your marriage and empower you to keep the covenant and promise you have solemnly declared.

[The Bible teaches us that marriage is a gift of God in creation and a means of his 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 his Church.

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 as the foundation of family life in which children may be [born and] nurtured in accordance with God's will, to his praise and glory. This is the meaning of the marriage you have made.]

You now wish to affirm your desire to live as followers of Christ, and you have come to him, the fountain of grace, that, strengthened by the prayers of the Church, you may be enabled to fulfil your marriage vows in love and faithfulness.

Let us keep silence and remember God's presence with us now.

God is love, and those who live in love live in God and God lives in them.
1 John 4.16

This prayer may be said:

Almighty God,

**to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Prayers of Penitence

The following Summary of the Law may be said:

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.'

The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

A minister may use these or other suitable words:

God so loved the world
that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ
to save us from our sins,
to be our advocate in heaven,
and to bring us to eternal life.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

(or)

We come to God as one from whom no secrets are hidden,
to ask for his forgiveness and peace.

One of the following forms or another authorized form of Confession and Absolution may be used:

Either

**Lord our God,
In our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
Like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us;
Deliver us from judgement;
Bind up our wounds and revive us;
In Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

The minister says:

The Lord forgive *you your* sin,
Unite *you* in the love which took Christ to the cross,
And bring *you* in the Spirit to his wedding feast in heaven.
Amen.

(or)

Lord, in our weakness you are our strength.
Lord have mercy.
Lord have mercy.

Lord, when we stumble, you raise us up.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Lord, when we fail, you give us new life.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

The minister says:

May God in his goodness forgive *us our* sins,
grant *us* strength in *our* weakness,
and bring *us* to eternal life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Collect

The minister invites the people to pray, silence is kept and the minister says the Collect

God our Father,
you have taught us through your Son
that love is the fulfilling of the law.
Grant to your servants
that, loving one another,
they may continue in your love until their lives' end:
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Readings

At least one reading from the Bible is used.

If there are two readings, a psalm or a hymn may be sung between them.

A sermon may be preached here or after the Dedication.

The Dedication

The husband and wife face the minister, who says:

N and *N*, you have committed yourselves to each other in marriage,
and your marriage is recognized by law.
The Church of Christ understands marriage to be,
in the will of God,
the union of a man and a woman,
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till parted by death.
Is this your understanding of the covenant and promise
that you have made?

Husband and wife: It is.

The minister says to the husband:

N, have you resolved to be faithful to your wife,
forsaking all others,
so long as you both shall live?

Husband: That is my resolve, with the help of God.

The minister says to the wife:

N, have you resolved to be faithful to your husband,
forsaking all others,
so long as you both shall live?

Wife: That is my resolve, with the help of God.

The minister may say:

Heavenly Father, by your blessing
let *these rings* be to *N* and *N*
a symbol of unending love and faithfulness
and of the promises they have made to each other;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The minister says to the congregation:

N and *N* have here affirmed
their Christian understanding and resolve
in the marriage which they have begun.
Will you, their families and friends,
support and uphold them in their marriage,
now and in the years to come?

We will.

The congregation remains standing.

The husband and wife kneel and say together:

Heavenly Father,
we offer you our souls and bodies,
our thoughts and words and deeds,
our love for one another.
Unite our wills in your will,
that we may grow together
in love and peace
all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The minister says:

Almighty God give you grace to persevere,

that he may complete in you
the work he has already begun,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Lord bless and watch over you,
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you,
the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace
all the days of your life.

Amen.

A sermon may be preached.

A hymn may be sung.

Prayers

One or more of the following prayers may be used:

Almighty God,
you send your Holy Spirit
to be the life and light of all your people.
Open the hearts of these your servants to the riches of
his grace,
that they may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

For the gift of children

Heavenly Father,
maker of all things,
you enable us to share in your work of creation.
Bless this couple in the gift and care of children,
that their home may be a place of love, security and
truth
and their children grow up to know and love you in
your Son
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

For families

Father of all life,
whose promise is to be the God of all the families of
your people,

give your grace to *N* and *N* in their new life together
and bless those for whom they care.
Enfold them in your love
as they share in their new family,
that they may grow up in all things into Christ,
who gave himself that all humanity might be made one
in him.

Amen.

For families

Heavenly Father,
we are your children, made in your image.
Hear our prayer
that fathers and mothers, sons and daughters,
may find together the perfect love that casts out fear,
walk together in the way that leads to eternal life
and grow up together into the full humanity
of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Concluding prayer

Eternal God, true and loving Father,
in holy marriage you make your servants one.
May their life together witness to your love in this
troubled world;
may unity overcome division,
forgiveness heal injury
and joy triumph over sorrow,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer is said.

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**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 evil.
For the kingdom, the power,**

**and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.
(or)**

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

**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,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

A hymn may be sung

The minister blesses the congregation in these or other words:

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.
Amen.

Notes

The Nature of the Service

The service is one in which the couple - already married - wish to dedicate to God their life together. Because it is not a marriage service, banns may not be called nor any entry made in the Register of Marriages.

Entrance of the Couple

Husband and wife should enter the church together without ceremony and sit together at the front of the church.

The Prayers

Other prayers may be used, especially when they form part of the particular Christian tradition of the husband or wife.

The Rings

Because the marriage has already taken place, no ring is to be given or received in the course of the service. If a ring is worn and the prayer of blessing is to be used, the hand should be extended towards the minister.