

## **SACRAMENT OF HOLY MATRIMONY**

### **Lighting of the Candles**

The lighted candles given to the bride and groom are signs of the "light of Christ", the "divine inspiration" of the Pentecost. The family should be like a "small church"; its members, as "children of light", need the faith and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

### **The Exchange of Rings**

The ring is a symbol of eternal love. It transforms two individuals into one. With the ring, the bride and the groom generously exchange their will for the eternal bond of marriage.

### **The Joining of the Right Hands**

The joining of the bride and groom's right hands by the priest symbolizes the oneness of Holy Matrimony. The priest reads a prayer asking God to embrace and unite the couple in concord of body and soul.

### **The Crowning of the Bride and Groom**

The crowns represent the divine glory and honour bestowed by God on the newlyweds. The priest forms a Cross with the two crowns in the name of the Holy Trinity.

### **The Common Cup**

The common cup of wine symbolizes the mutual participation in the joys and sorrows of life. In marriage, everything is common between spouses.

### **The Ceremonial Walk**

The walk three times around the Holy Table, representing the Holy Altar and known as the "Dance of Isaiah", joins the bride and groom to a life of happiness with Christ as the central point of reference.

## **THE PREPARATION**

Please contact the Church Office to book the date and time of your wedding. The office will need the following information:

- Names and phone numbers of the couple and Koumbaro/a and the witness.
  - All parties involved in the service (the couple and Koumbaro/a) must be Orthodox, if not, proof of confirmation is required.
  - If the Koumbaro/a is/are married they can only have been married in the Orthodox Church.
  - The couple and Koumbaro/a must all be members in good standing with the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Community of London and Vicinity. Membership dues for two consecutive years constitute members in good standing. If the couple or Koumbaro/a are members of another Orthodox Church, fees will still apply.
  - The civil license has to be obtained from City Hall 2 months prior to the date of the wedding.
  - Once the civil license has been obtained, the Affidavit for license to marry must also be completed at the church and witnessed by the priest.
  - The Koumbaro/a provides the following: Stefana (crowns placed on a tray with sugar coated almonds [koufeta]) 2 large white candles, 2 small white candles (which may be purchased at the church) Mavrodaphne wine.
- Wedding Service fee and obligations:**
- \$130.00 Administration fee
  - Must be good standing members (paid 2 most recent years).

## **THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY**



### **HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX COMMUNITY OF LONDON & VICINITY**

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For the union of a man and woman to be recognized as sacramentally valid by the Orthodox Church, the following conditions must be met:

1. The Sacrament of Matrimony must be celebrated by an Orthodox Priest of a canonical Orthodox jurisdiction, according to the liturgical tradition of the Orthodox Church, in a canonical Orthodox Church, and with the authorization of the diocesan Bishop.
2. Before requesting permission from his Bishop to perform the marriage, the Priest must verify that:
  - a. neither of the parties in question are already married to other persons, either in this country or elsewhere;
  - b. the parties in question are not related to each other to a degree that would constitute an impediment;
  - c. if either or both parties are widowed, they have presented the death certificate(s) of the deceased spouse(s);
  - d. if either or both of the parties have been previously married in the Orthodox Church, they have obtained ecclesiastical as well as civil divorce(s);
  - e. a civil license has been obtained from civil authorities.
3. In cases involving the marriage of Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christians, the latter must have been baptized, in water, in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Church cannot bless the marriage of an Orthodox Christian to a non-Christian.
4. No person may marry more than three times in the Church, with permission for a third marriage granted only with extreme oikonomia.

5. The Sponsor (koumbaros or koumbara) must provide a current certificate of membership proving him or her to be an Orthodox Christian in good standing with the Church. A person who does not belong to a parish, or who belongs to a parish under the jurisdiction of a bishop who is not in communion with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, or who, if married, has not had his or her marriage blessed by the Orthodox Church, or, if divorced, has not received an ecclesiastical divorce, cannot be a sponsor. Non-Orthodox persons may be members of the wedding party, but may not exchange the rings or crowns.

#### **Days When Marriage Is Not Permitted**

Marriages are not performed on fast days or during fasting seasons; these include the Great Lent and Holy Week, August 1-15, August 29 (Beheading of St. John the Baptist), September 14 (Exaltation of the Holy Cross), and December 13-25. Nor are marriages celebrated on the day before and the day of a Great Feast of the Lord, including Theophany (January 5 and 6), Pascha, Pentecost, and Christmas (December 24 and 25). Marriages may be performed on these days only by permission of the diocesan Bishop.

#### **Inter-religious Marriages**

Canonical and theological reasons preclude the Orthodox Church from performing the Sacrament of Marriage for couples where one partner is Orthodox and the other partner is a non-Christian. As such, Orthodox Christians choosing to enter such marriages fall out of good standing with their Church and are unable to actively participate in the life of the Church. While this stance may seem confusing and rigid, it is guided by the Orthodox Church's love and concern for its member's religious and spiritual well-being.

#### **Prohibited Marriages with Orthodox Christians**

Seventh Day Advents, Assembly of God, Jehovah's Witness, Swedenborgian, Unitarian, Mennonite, Mormon (Latter Day Saints), Salvation Army, Quakers, Spiritualist, Jew, Muslim, Non-Christian, Buddhist, Hinduist, Members of any far Eastern Religion.

#### **Inter-Christian Marriages**

The Orthodox Church will bless marriages between Orthodox and non-Orthodox partners, provided that:

1. The non-Orthodox partner is a Christian who has been baptized, in water, in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; and
2. The couple should be willing to baptize their children in the Orthodox Church and raise and nurture them in accordance with the Orthodox Faith.

A baptized Orthodox Christian whose wedding has not been blessed by the Orthodox Church is no longer in good standing with the Church, and may not receive the Sacraments of the Church, including Holy Communion, or become a Sponsor of an Orthodox Marriage, Baptism or Chrismation. A non-Orthodox Christian who marries an Orthodox Christian does not thereby become a member of the Orthodox Church, and may not receive the Sacraments, including Holy Communion, or be buried by the Church, serve on the Parish Council, or vote in parish assemblies or elections. To participate in the Church's life, one must be received into the Church by the Sacrament of Baptism or, in the case of persons baptized with water in the Holy Trinity, following a period of instruction, by Chrismation.

#### **Religions that are Recognized by the Orthodox Church**

Roman Catholic, Anglican (Episcopalian in the United States), United, Lutheran, Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist.

#### **The following types of relationships constitute impediments to marriage:**

1. Parents with their own children, grandchildren or great-grandchildren, or godchildren of the same godparents.
2. Brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law.
3. Uncles and aunts with nieces and nephews.
4. First cousins with each other.
5. Foster parents with foster children or foster children with the children of foster parents.
6. Godparents with godchildren or godparents with the parents of their godchildren.