

THE MYSTERY OF CROWNING
According to the Maronite Antiochene Church

*Diocese of Saint Maron — U.S.A.
Diocesan Office of Liturgy
Washington, D.C.
1985*

Nihil obstat:
Reverend John D. Faris, J.C.O.D.
Censor Librorum

Imprimatur:
Archbishop Francis M. Zayek, J.C.D., S.T.D.
Bishop of Saint Maron

June 29, 1985
Saint Peter and Saint Paul

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INTRODUCTION

This English translation of the Mystery of Crowning is based on the Book of Rituals for the Service of the Holy Mysteries, published by the Antiochene Patriarchate of the Maronites, Bkerke, Mount Lebanon (1942).

The Book of Rituals is the first and only text ever to be printed with the official seal of a Maronite Patriarch (Anthony Peter Arida). It contains a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Oriental Churches and bears the approval of the Apostolic See (Pope Pius XI). It was a long over-due response to an urgent call made by the Fathers of the Synod of Mount Lebanon, in 1736, for a definitive, unified and genuinely Maronite ritual (Synod of Mount Lebanon, I,3,v).

For centuries, the various rites were scattered in handwritten manuscripts, without ever being assembled into one book. In 1647 and in 1717, some of them appeared as appendices to the breviary. In 1752, a Maronite, Peter Mobarak, published on his own a ritual book in Rome. It was denounced by the then Patriarch, Simon Awad, in 1755 and again by Patriarch Tobiah El-Khazen in 1756. Bishop Joseph Stephan (later Patriarch) edited a new version of the rites at Rome in the year 1840. This version was revised in Beirut in 1897, but was never granted an official patriarchal imprimatur. Finally, the official work of the revision was assigned to the noted Maronite liturgist, Chorbishop Michael Raggi (+1980) who began his work in 1935.

It will suffice here to note that for the Mystery of Crowning, Chorbishop Raggi sought out and reviewed the manuscripts which belong, in one way or another, to Maronite tradition or usage. In his research, he noted three sources for the rites: one was heavily based on Jacobite texts; the second received direct input from the Latin rituals; the third proved to be more authentically Maronite and were free from outside influences. In all he investigated some thirty manuscripts which were conserved in the libraries of Bkerke, the Vatican, Paris and London.

Among the manuscripts of the third group which preserve texts of the marriage rite are the following:

Bkerke, no. 100 (from the beginning of the XIV century);

Bkerke, no. 98 (dated 1354);

Bkerke, no. 96 (from the XV century);

Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale, nos. 116, 117, and 118 (from the XV century).

Chorbishop Raggi studied the manuscripts individually and compared them with each other, as well as with the texts of the other Eastern liturgies. In addition, he relied, to a great extent, on the reform which was initiated by Patriarch Stephan Ad-Queihi (+1704), but, for strange and incomprehensible reasons, was lost between Mount Lebanon and Rome without ever being published. The result of Raggi's work, which was accomplished in three years, was the current officially approved ritual which is now used throughout the Maronite Church.

The seventh chapter of the 1942 edition of the Book of Rituals (pp 231-268) contains the Mystery of Crowning under the title, On Holy Marriage. The chapter is divided into two sections and is preceded by some practical canons and instructions. The first section is entitled, The Rite of Betrothal, and the second is called, The Rite of Legal Crowning.

The Rite of Betrothal includes three acts without introduction:

- The Rite of Covenant (consent of the couple, joining of the hands and blessing by the priest);
- The Blessing and Giving of the Rings (on the right ring finger);
- The Blessing of the Ornaments (cincture, clothing and jewelry) and Binding of the Couple.

In the current discipline, the Rite of Betrothal is ignored. However, originally it reproduced the same meaning and effect of the betrothal as practiced in the Old Testament. The covenant and the giving of the rings, in the betrothal, represented then the definitive engagement of the couple. They were not simply considered as the sign of a promise the couple made to each other, nor as the pledge they were called to honor at a later time. On the contrary, they indicated the true beginning of marriage itself - with only one exception, that is: the right to live together under the same roof.

The Rite of Crowning itself is introduced by an hour of the Divine Office, which forms the Service of the Word. Then the rite itself follows in three stages:

- the Rite of Covenant, including the verbal consent of the groom and bride, the joining of their right hands and the priest's blessing;
- the Blessing and the Giving of the Rings (which are placed on the left ring finger);
- the Rite of Crowning and the Removal of the Crowns.

The first two stages, covenant and giving of the rings, are but a duplication of those performed in the betrothal rite. Originally, they did not belong to the Rite of crowning itself.

Put side by side, they show the same structure and meaning. However, the Rite of Betrothal appears to be more genuine. It keeps older features such as the warning of the priest after the pact: "Beware, I am not responsible for your action, . . .", and also the prayer following the joining of the hands, with its symbolic allusion to the baptismal mystery (the well of Haran; the betrothal contracted by Eliezer for Isaac). Besides, it uses more archaic forms in the texts, as it is seen in the solemn blessing over the joining of the hands (the Trinitarian invocation).

The verbal expression of the consent found in the betrothal as well as in the crowning is an obvious Latin influence. In fact, since the XVI century, precisely since the Synod of Caenoubine (1580), a Western sacramental concept and formulation were decreed in the canons of marriage, and inserted methodically into the liturgical texts and rites.

Under the influence of the Nomocanon of Al-Assal (XIII century), the Maronite rite was subjected at one time to another alteration. This came from the Coptic rite of betrothal, in the form of an anointing of the couple after the joining of the hands. Yet, while in the Coptic rite, this anointing was considered as a chrismation and had a consecratory power, however in the Maronite rite, it took a penitential meaning - that of purification and exorcism. Besides, this anointing was not limited to the couple themselves, it was also administered to the community present at the marriage ceremony. The use of this anointing was still going at the end of the XVI century.

In spite of such influences, the loss of the original elements and damaging amputations, and in spite of an obscure growth and the lack of satisfying sources and references, the Maronite rite of marriage belongs, undoubtedly, to the family of Eastern rites. With them, it shares important elements of Antiochene and Syro-Palestinian roots, going back to a primitive Judeo-Christian tradition. It did not preserve the well-balanced structure of the old Syrian rite of the East, nor the archaic expression of the Chaldean rite; however, it fits within the same pattern of their concepts and forms, while showing particular notes of its own, mainly of popular and monastic imprint.

Elements of special meaning and importance for Eastern liturgies abound in the text of the Maronite rite: the invocation of the "name" of God, which is a precise cultural act of the Temple; the reference to the Trinitarian expression in which the Father "rules all", the son "redeems all", the Holy Spirit "instructs all"; the extensive use of the "right hand" of God, which manifests the protecting power of God; the many references to the marriage of the Fathers of Old, especially Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who are considered as the pioneers of the first covenant and whose marriage represented the prototype of the actual one; the use of terms such as, "shooro" (wall, tower of protection), "gzoro" (flock), "mashcan Zabno" (tabernacle, dwelling place of the Lord), . .

On the other hand, the themes expressed in the Maronite rite are all familiar to the Eastern liturgies. They stem from a basic theological vision, stressed briefly and soberly in the two traditional readings: marital love is at the image of Christ and his Church (Ephesians 5:22-33), and marital union is final as God's covenants are always final (Matthew 19:3-6).

The theme of Christ and Church is dominant. As a matter of fact, the liturgical text seems to be more concerned with the betrothal of Christ and his Church than with the actual marriage of the couple in presence. The proemion sets the theme:

"The heavenly Bridegroom betrothed,
in his love,
the Church of all nations;
he sanctified her by his cross
and made her a glorious bride."

As far as God's covenants are concerned, they permeate the whole liturgical celebration, in the various aspects of their revelations: the "cosmic" covenant, contracted with the fathers, kings, priests, prophets, apostles and holy women. . .; the "mysterious" covenant, in which Christ "sealed his nuptial pact with the Church", and "wrote it with his blood"; the "eschatological" covenant, which was from the beginning and is the end and perfection of all others, and by which the crowning ceremony prepares, lives in the present times and leads the way to the second coming and the Kingdom.

Underlining these themes, there is at the center of the liturgy the idea of joy. The rite of marriage is, in fact, a celebration of joy. Joy is intended in the references to "pardon of faults and forgiveness of sins", for joy is a fruit of purification and liberation; it is expressed in the call for happiness, prosperity and fecundity; it is mainly told in the many blessings that keep "showering" upon the couple during the celebration; it is finally brought by the "mysterious" presence of Christ, similar to his "physical" presence in the wedding of Cana of Galilee:

"O Christ, the Bridegroom,
you were invited to Cana of Galilee
and you showered your blessings
upon the groom and bride" (Qolo)

"You gave joy
to the groom and bride
at the wedding banquet of Cana" (Etol)

The official language of the 1942 patriarchal edition of the Book of Rituals is Syriac, which is considered to be a proper expression of the Maronite liturgy. However, each Syriac is accompanied by an Arabic translation written in Karshuni; the Arabic text always follows the Syriac one. The only texts which are not translated into Arabic are the qoley and the hymn "Christ the Heavenly Bridegroom" (which is sung between the crowning and the removal of the crowns). The rubrics are disposed in two columns, the Syriac on the right and the Arabic/Karshuni on the left. However, after the gospel reading, there is an admonition which is given only in Arabic/Karshuni. It is intended to take the place of the homily and is meant to provide the minister of the crowning with the proper text when he is unable or unprepared to deliver his own homily. The admonition is omitted here.

This revised text for Rite of Crowning offers a faithful English version of the current official text of the Maronite Church, both in letter and in spirit, despite slight omissions, abbreviations and rearrangements in the texts and rubrics.

Rev. Msgr. Hector Y. Doueiri, S.T.O.
Director,
Diocesan Office of Liturgy

RITE OF BETROTHAL



PREPARATIONS

The priest, deacon and the fiance and his family proceed to the house of the fiancée.

A paten with two rings on it and, if they are to be used, a cincture, clothing, and jewelry are prepared on a suitable table.

Then they begin the contract of the Covenant or Alliance.

RITE OF BETROTHAL

RITE OF THE COVENANT

The celebrant faces the couple and asks them:

Cel: Do you N., (his name) and you N., (her name) consent to exchange the betrothal of the divine love?

The fiance and his fiancée each answer, saying:

Couple: We do, Father.

The celebrant then repeats, three times:

**Cel: Beware, I am not responsible for your action.
The community of faithful,
here present,
bears witness to me.**

Prayer of the Joining of the Hands

The couple join their right hands. The celebrant covers them with his stole, places his own right hand over theirs and proclaims:

Cel: In your name, O almighty God, the Father
 who rules all;
in the name of your beloved Son,
 who redeems all with his forgiving blood,
 shed on our behalf;
in the name of your Holy Spirit, the Paraclete,
 who instructs all;
we sign your servants N and N
who have joined each other here
 to contract a covenant before you.
Shower upon them your all-merciful grace.
Grant them pardon of their faults,
knowledge of your precepts,
obedience to your laws
and understanding of your marvels.
As you bestow upon them these
 and other similar gifts,
may your harmony abide between them
 and your peace stay with them.
May your grace overshadow them
 and your fear dwell in them.

O Lord,
in your bounty you gave your apostles
 the power to bind and loose,
and they, in turn, handed it on to us.

Likewise, by your power
and in accordance with your true laws,
which never deceive,
we betrothe to each other these two children
N and N.
We set before them the limits
you established yourself
between the pure and the impure,
between those who obey and those who do not.
Enrich them with all your gifts,
through the prayers of the prophets,
apostles and blessed martyrs,
particularly through that of the Mother of God,
Mary, worthy of all blessings.

Cong: Amen.

*The couple release their right hands, and the
celebrant prays:*

Cel: God sent his angel before Eliezer,
the servant of Abraham,
and Eliezer betrothed Rebecca to Isaac,
the son of his master,
by the well.
May he send his grace and favors,
by this covenant,
upon this couple
and upon those who betrothe them.
May this covenant between them
be a pledge of love
and a memorial of blessings.
May the concord and peace of our Lord God
and Savior Jesus Christ
be with you all.

Cong: Amen.

BLESSING OF THE RINGS

*Then the celebrant recites the following prayer
over the rings:*

**Cel: O Lord,
extend the right hand of your Trinity
and bless + these rings,
which we give to your servants.**

**Sanctify them + by your word
and grant that they may wear them +
in the sharing of their betrothal.**

**May these rings be a wall of protection
for their bodies,
and shield them from all harm.**

**May your grace shine upon them
and your right hand, filled with mercy,
bless them.**

**In sharing their happiness,
may they give you glory and thanksgiving,
now and for ever.**

Cong: Amen.

Giving of the Rings

The celebrant places the rings on the right ring finger, first of the fiancée and then of the fiancé, and proclaims:

Cel: With the rings of your betrothal,
may the right hand of our Lord
Jesus Christ
descend upon you.
May the blessings of his grace,
which fulfills all needs,
abound in you.
May these rings be a tower of
protection for you.
May they shield you from all harm.
May you set out for the tabernacle
of the Lord
and mingle with his blessed flock.
To you, O Lord, be glory, for ever.

Cong: Amen.

BLESSING OF CINCTURE, CLOTHING AND JEWELRY

The celebrant recites the following prayer over the cincture, the clothes and the jewelry, if there are any:

Cel: O God,
by your command,
you established the universe and all creatures,
and set up the tabernacle with its splendid ornaments.
Now bless + these wedding garments
and those who will wear them.
As they are clothed in them and rejoice at
their marriage,
may the years of their lives be multiplied + in honor.
[May they have the joy of preparing similar garments
for their children,
and even more splendid ones for their children's
children.]
As they exult in joy,
may they be adorned with them in joyful celebrations,
and offer glory and thanksgiving to you,
now and for ever.

Cong: Amen.

Binding with the Cincture

*If they wish, the celebrant binds the couple together
with the cincture, as he announces:*

Cel: O Lord,
bind our celebrations
with chains,
up to the horns of the altar. (Psalm 118:22)

CONCLUDING PRAYER

The celebrant concludes with the following prayer:

**Cel: O mighty Lord God,
in your grace + bless our brother and sister
who have come here to contract their betrothal
in accordance with our laws.
Surround them with your spiritual + blessings.
Make them and us worthy to stand blameless
before the fearsome throne of your majesty,
so that, both here and there,
we may all offer glory and thanksgiving to you,
now and forever.**

Cong: Amen.

MYSTERY OF CROWNING



PREPARATIONS

1. A table is prepared outside the sanctuary on the bema; it is covered with a white cloth. Next to this table a censer with lighted charcoal is placed.
2. On the table are: two lighted candles, a Bible, the rings and crowns for the groom, bride and the two witnesses. The crowns are preferably made of fresh flowers.
3. The celebrant and ministers stand behind the table, facing the congregation. The wedding party stands at the opposite side of the table and faces the celebrant. The groom stands to the celebrant's right along with his best man and other attendants, while the bride stands to the celebrant's left along with her matron or maid of honor and other attendants (the bride stands to the right of the groom).

SERVICE OF THE WORD

DOXOLOGY

STAND

Cel: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.

Cong: Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

Cel: O Lord,
make us worthy to begin by glorifying you
and to end by giving you thanks.
Bless us in your peace.
Guard your servants, N. and N.;
protect them by your cross
and save them from evil and all harm.
Glory be to you, our Lord and God, for ever.

Cong: Amen.

PSALM 128

SIT

Psalm 128 is then sung; the verses may be alternated by the celebrant and the congregation.

- Happy are you who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways!
- For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork;
happy shall you be, and favored.

- Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine
in the recesses of your home;
- Your children like olive plants around your table.
- Behold, thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord.
- The Lord bless you from Zion: may you see the
prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life;
- May you see your children's children. Peace be upon
Israel!

All: Glory to you, O Lord!

HOOSOYO

STAND

*The celebrant places incense in the censer and
blesses it, saying:*

Cel: I burn this incense to praise and honor the most Holy
Trinity; Lord, have mercy on us.

Proemion

The celebrant sings the Proemion:

Cel: May we be worthy to offer praise and thanksgiving to
Jesus Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom.
In his love, he betrothed the Church of all peoples and
nations;
by his cross he sanctified her and made her a glorious
bride.
To him are due glory and honor,
now and for ever.

Cong: Amen.

Sedro

The celebrant then sings the Sedro:

Cel: Lord God,
Creator and Ruler of all things,
you took the dust of the earth into your holy hands,
fashioned Adam in your glorious image,
and formed our mother, Eve, from his rib.

O Lover of all people,
with your right hand now bless your servants, N. and N.,
who are betrothed to one another.
Confirm them in faith, hope, love and just deeds.
Make their marriage as honorable as the marriages
of the righteous and just of old.

They served you in justice
and you multiplied their descendants
like the stars of the sky and the grains of sand on the
seashore.

As they brought forth priests, kings, prophets,
apostles, preachers and teachers of your good news,
so likewise grant your servants, N. and N.,
to bear the fruits of justice
(and bring forth children of blessings).
Fill them with your fear
and surround them with your peace all the days of their
lives.

Indeed, O Lord our God,
assist them with your might
and extend your right hand over them.
Protect them with your loving cross
and keep them safe by your holy angels.
We shall praise and thank you, your Father and
your Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.

Cong: Amen.

Qolo [Tune: Afeefo]

The following qolo is then sung; the verses may be alternated by the celebrant and congregation.

Alleluia!
Glory to you, O Lord.

O Christ, the Bridegroom,
you were invited to Cana of Galilee.

You showered your blessings
upon the groom and the bride.

Now extend your right hand, rich in grace,
and bless both this groom, N., and bride, N.;

And they shall glorify you, your Father and
your Holy Spirit.

All: Alleluia and Alleluia!

Etro

The celebrant then prays the Etro:

Cel: Praised are you, O Jesus Christ, our Lord,
the God of Abraham, Issac and Jacob;
you gave joy to the groom and the bride
at the wedding banquet at Cana of Galilee.
Now, O Lord,
accept the perfume of this incense.
Bless the groom, N., and the bride, N.,
their witnesses and all their guests,
as you blessed the just and their children.
To you be glory,
now and for ever.

Cong: Amen.

[TRISAGION]

When the crowning takes place during the Divine Service of the Holy Mysteries, the Trisagion is now sung, otherwise it may be omitted.

**Cel: Holy are you, O God;
Holy are you, O Strong One;
Holy are you, O Immortal One.
O Christ, you betrothed the Church,
have mercy on us.**

**Cong: Holy are you, O God;
Holy are you, O Strong One.
Holy are you, O Immortal One.
O Christ, you betrothed the Church,
have mercy on us.**

**Cel: Holy are you, O God;
Holy are you, O Strong One;
Holy are you, O Immortal One.
O Christ, you betrothed the Church,
have mercy on us.**

MAZMOORO [Tune: Ramrinein]

Deacon: Let us sing the psalm of glory and may God bless us.

Cel: Praise and glorify the Lord!

**Cong: O Lord, may your cross shield the groom,
the bride and the witnesses.
They came to your holy Church to receive
the blessing of your priests.**

Cel: They sowed the fields and planted vineyards,
and they obtained a fruitful yield. (Psalm 107:17)
Lord, bless the groom, the bride and the witnesses;
bless them abundantly.

Cong: You accepted the offerings made by the righteous
before us, O Lord,
now accept our service and be attentive to our prayers.

READINGS

SIT

*One or more of the following readings from
Scripture is proclaimed:*

Ephesians 5:22-23 or

Old Testament

Genesis 1:26-28, 31

Genesis 1:2, 18-24

Tobit 8:5-7

Sirach 26:4, 13-16

New Testament

1 Corinthians 6:13-20

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Romans 12:1-2, 9-18

1 Peter 3:1-9

*At the end of the last reading, the reader
proclaims:*

Reader: Praise be to God always!

FETGOMO

Cong: Alleluia! Alleluia!

Cantor: Hear, O daughter and see; turn your ear,
forget your people and your father's house.
So shall the king desire your beauty.
(Psalm 45:11-12)

Cong: Alleluia!

GOSPEL

STAND

Cel: Peace be with you.

Cong: And also with you.

Cel: Let us be attentive to the gospel of life and salvation of
our Lord Jesus Christ as recorded by:
Matthew 19:3-6 or

Matthew 7:21, 24-29

Mark 10:6-9

John 1:1-11

John 15:9-12

John 15:12-16

*At the end of the gospel, the celebrant kisses the
book and blesses the congregation with it, saying:*

This is the truth. Peace be with you.

KOROZOOTO

Cong: Praise, thanksgiving and blessings to Christ Jesus
for giving us his words of life,
to his Father who sent him to redeem us
and to his living Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. Amen.

HOMILY

The celebrant then gives a homily in which he explains the Mystery of Crowning.

RITE OF CROWNING

DIACONAL PROCLAMATION

SIT

Deacon: Again and again, let us pray to the Lord.

Cong: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the peace of the Church and her children,
let us pray to the Lord.

Cong: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the crowning of N. and N.,
that it may be blessed and sanctified by the indwelling
of the Holy Spirit,
let us pray to the Lord.

Cong: Lord, have mercy.

Other petitions may be added.

Qolo [Tune: Fsheeto]

The following qolo is then sung; the verses may be alternated by the celebrant and congregation.

Alleluia!

**The divine Groom has betrothed to himself a bride
who is and will be without equal.**

**Her beauty surpasses all,
and her Groom is alive for ever.**

**With the blood that flowed from his side,
he wrote her marriage covenant.**

**And at all times, she proclaims:
Glory to you, O Lord!**

Alleluia and Alleluia!

MARRIAGE COVENANT

*The groom and bride then exchange their marriage
covenant.*

The celebrant first addresses the groom:

**Cel: N., my beloved son,
do you take N., here present,
for your wife?**

Groom: I do, Father.

The celebrant then addresses the bride:

**Cel: N., my beloved daughter,
do you take N., here present,
for your husband?**

Bride: I do, Father.

The couple join their right hands on the Bible. The celebrant then covers their hands with his stole and places his right hand over theirs, as he proclaims:

Cel: By the hand of God and his holy Word,
our son, N. and our daughter, N. are joined in
marriage
in the name of the most Holy Trinity:
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
the One and only true God.
May their marriage be as firm as the covenant
by which heaven and earth were created,
and be blessed as was the covenant
by which Sarah was joined to Abraham,
Rebecca to Isaac and Rachel to Jacob,
so that nothing shall separate them but death.

Cong: Amen.

BLESSING OF THE RINGS

The groom and bride release their hands, and the celebrant proceeds to bless the rings, saying:

Cel: O Lord,
extend the right hand of your Trinity
and bless + these rings,
which we give to your servants.
Sanctify + them by our word
and grant that they may wear them +
in the sharing of their marriage.
May these rings be a wall of protection
for their bodies,
and shield them from all harm.
May our grace shine upon them
and your right hand, filled with mercy, bless them.
In sharing their happiness,
may they give you glory and thanksgiving,

now and for ever.

Cong: Amen.

Giving of Rings

*The celebrant places the rings on the left ring finger
of the groom and bride and says:*

Cel: With the rings of your marriage
may the right hand of our Lord Jesus Christ
descend upon you.
May the blessings of his grace,
which fulfills all needs,
abound in you.
May these rings be a tower of protection
for you.
May they shield you from all harm.
May you set out for the tabernacle of the Lord
and mingle with his blessed flock.
To you, O Lord, be glory, for ever.

Cong: Amen.

BLESSING OF THE CROWNS

The celebrant next blesses the crowns, saying:

Cel: Like a crown, God has adorned the earth with flowers,
the heavens with stars,
and the land with the sea.
With a crown he has shown the special calling
given to the holy kings, priests, prophets and
apostles.
In his bountiful mercy may he bless + these crowns
through the prayers of the Mother of God
and all the saints.

Cong: Amen.

Crowning of the Groom

The celebrant crowns the groom as the cantor sings all or at least some of the following verses:

Psalm 21:2-5

O Lord, in your strength the king is glad;

in your victory, how greatly he rejoices!

You have granted him his heart's desire;

you refused not the wish of his lips.

For you welcomed him with goodly blessings,

you placed on his head a crown of pure gold.

He asked life of you: you gave him length of

days for ever and ever.

The celebrant prays over the groom, saying:

**Cel: May the Lord who crowned our holy fathers with
justice look upon you with love.
You have come to the holy Church seeking assistance,
may the Lord bless you,
protect you always,
and lead you to everlasting life.**

Cong: Amen.

Crowning of the Bride

The celebrant crowns the bride as the cantor sings all or at least some of the following verses:

Psalm 45:11-12, 14

Hear, O daughter, and see; turn your ear,
forget your people and your father's house.
So shall the king desire your beauty;
for he is your Lord, and you must worship him.
The beauty of the king's daughter is from inside;
her raiment is threaded with spun gold.

The celebrant prays over the bride, saying:

Cel: May God who crowned all the holy women
and blessed Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel,
bless you, be merciful to you, and exalt you
with the crown of glory.
Adorned with the fruits of the Spirit,
may you flourish as a blessed vine
in the midst of the Church;
may the Lord God fill you with joy
as you dwell with your husband in love
and abiding peace;
(may you bring forth children pleasing to God,)
through the intercession of Mary, the Mother of God,
and all the saints.

Cong: Amen.

Crowning of the Witnesses

*The celebrant then crowns the witnesses and prays
over them, saying:*

Cel: O God and King,
bless these witnesses who receive the crowns of
witness.
Protect them by your cross,
and, as they have today witnessed in your holy house,
provide them with your blessings,
all the days of their lives.
O Lord, our God, to you be glory, for ever.

Cong: Amen.

HYMN (Meter of Saint Ephrem)

The following hymn is then sung. It may be alternated by the celebrant and congregation.

1. O Christ,
you appeared from Mary and from
the seed of your servant David;
you clothed yourself with our human flesh
and became one of us.
O Christ, the Bridegroom,
you betrothed the holy and faithful Church;
in the upper room you gave her
your body and blood
and sealed your nuptial covenant with her.
2. O beautiful One,
you invited those endowed with beauty
to your wedding banquet;
they each brought their fitting nuptial gift.
O Lord,
now extend your right hand
and bless the bridegroom and the bride;
they came to the holy Church to receive
the blessing of the priests.

3. We all proclaim your praise:
the Church that blessed their crowning,
the priests and congregation that prayed for them,
the infants and children, the young
men and maidens,
the groom, bride and witnesses,
the guests and the hosts,
and all who are joined here with us now.
4. The guitars and the trumpets, the flutes and the flute
players,
all the pleasing gifts chant glory to the Trinity,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, One true God.
Glory be to you and mercy be upon us,
now and at all times. Amen and Amen.

REMOVAL OF THE CROWNS

*The celebrant extends his right hand over the
groom and says:*

Cel: May the Lord who rules the whole universe bless +
you
and richly endow the work of your hands.
May your home be secure as the dwelling place of
David.
May your wife be precious in your eyes
and be as a column of fire within your home.
May you find happiness all the days of your life.
(May your children stand upright before you
like the cedars of Lebanon.)
May God multiply your riches
and may you give aid and comfort to those who
call upon you.
May you walk in the path of righteousness
all the days of your life,
that you may always render God glory and thanksgiving.

Cong: Amen.

The celebrant removes the crown from the groom.

He then turns to the bride and extends his right hand over her and says:

**Cel: May the Lord who has filled creation with beauty
and made the just rejoice in their deeds,
enrich you with good works.
May he confirm your heart in his justice.
(May you bring forth children pleasing to him.)
May you live with your husband in peace and love.
May your lamp be lighted before the Lord
on the day of his coming.**

Cong: Amen.

The celebrant removes the crown from the bride.

He then extends his right hand over the two witnesses and says:

**Cel: O Lord God,
may these witnesses be worthy to receive from you
their good reward.
May they go out to meet you in joy
and may their lamps burn with
works of justice,
through the intercession of the blessed Virgin Mary
and all the saints.**

Cong: Amen.

The celebrant removes the crowns from the witnesses.

The celebrant then prays:

**Cel: May God bless you:
groom, bride and witnesses,
and protect this community by his glorious cross.
May you begin and end your married life in justice.
(May you bring forth children pleasing to God in
this world.)
And in the world to come,
may you reach the harbor of eternal life.**

Cong: Amen.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

STAND

The rite concludes with the following prayer.

However, if the Rite of Crowning takes place during the Divine Service of the Holy Mysteries, this prayer is recited as the blessing at the end of the Mysteries and is omitted here. The Pre-Anaphora and Anaphora now follow on page 31.

**Cel: May the Lord God accompany you
from his holy temple
and protect you in body and soul.
May he protect you from the snares of the devil
and deliver you from the deceits of the wicked.
After a long and happy life
may he make you worthy to hear from him
these words of joy:
“Come, blessed of my Father, and inherit eternal life.”**

*He then makes the sign of the cross over them with
the hand cross, saying:*

Father, Son + and Holy Spirit.

Cong: Amen.

SERVICE OF THE HOLY MYSTERIES

PRE-ANAPHORA

Access to the Altar

SIT

After the Crowning, the celebrant approaches the altar and chants or recites:

Cel: I have entered your house, O God, and I have worshiped in your temple. O King of glory, forgive all my sins.

Cong: O King of glory, forgive all our sins.

Transfer of the Offerings

The offerings are carried in procession and presented to the celebrant. During the procession, the congregation sings or recites the following hymn:

Cong: The Lord reigns clothed in majesty.
Alleluia!
I am the Bread of Life said our Lord.
From on high, I came to earth,
so men might live in me.
Pure Word without flesh,
I was sent from the Father.
Mary's womb received me
like good earth a grain of wheat.
Behold! The priest bears me aloft
to the altar.
Alleluia! Accept our offering.

Prayer of Offering

After receiving the offerings, the celebrant raises them and, facing the congregation, says:

Cel: Almighty and wondrous God, you accepted the offerings of the just. Accept these gifts from your faithful who have chosen them from among their possessions and presented them to you and to your holy name as a pledge of their sincere love. Give them in exchange of their perishable gifts an imperishable kingdom. Amen.

The celebrant places the offerings on the altar and says one of the following:

Cel: O God, you accepted the sacrifice of Abel in the wilderness, that of faithful Abraham on the mountain and the widow's mite in the temple. Accept our offering, and in your mercy, remember the living and the dead for whom we pray. Amen.

OR

O God, we remember our Lord Jesus Christ and his plan of salvation. We recall all who have pleased you from the beginning to the present, especially the glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God, St. Maron, (the patron of the church, St. N.). We offer this sacrifice in which we commemorate the members of our families, the living and the departed, children of the holy Church, and especially your servants N., and N., for whom we present this sacrifice.

The celebrant burns incense:

Cel: I burn this incense to praise and honor the most Holy Trinity. Lord have mercy on us.

The celebrant then incenses the offerings, altar, cross and congregation while the following hymn is sung or recited:

Cong: In your clemency and kindness, O Lover of penitent sinners, accept this incense which the faithful of your Church offer to praise you and make atonement. As you accepted the sacrifice of Abraham on the mountain and the sweet smelling incense of Aaron, your priest, was pleasing to you, so may our incense please you, O Lord, and forgive us in your abundant mercy.

**ANAPHORA OF ST. EUSTATIUS,
PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH**

RITE OF PEACE

STAND

The celebrant signs himself with the hand cross as he says:

Cel: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Cong: Amen.

He continues with his hands extended:

Cel: O compassionate Lord, you answer those who gather to call upon you. We now come together and ask that you allow us to share a holy greeting of peace, that we may praise you, now and forever.

Cong: Amen.

The deacon chants the median diaconal proclamation proper to the liturgical celebration, "Let us stand well..."

The celebrant touches the altar and the offerings, saying:

Cel: Peace to you, O holy altar of God, Peace to the offerings placed upon you. (In concelebration: Peace to you, O priests of God.) Peace to you, O server of the Holy Spirit.

The deacon, server or celebrant gives the sign of peace to the congregation.

Deacon: Let us exchange a greeting of peace with one another in charity and loyalty, that we may serve the Lord.

Cong: Make us worthy, O Lord.

After the sign of peace has been exchanged, he says:

Deacon: Let us stand devoutly and praise and thank our Savior, the Lamb of God, We present the oblations to you, Father, accept them and pray for us.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Dialog

The celebrant blesses the congregation with the hand cross, saying:

Cel: May the love of God the Father + the grace of the only-begotten Son and the unity and indwelling of the Holy Spirit be with you.

Cong: And also with you.

The celebrant raises his hands and says:

Cel: Let us raise our thoughts, our minds and our hearts.

Cong: They are raised to you, O Lord.

The celebrant extends his hands:

Cel: Let us praise and worship the Lord.

Cong: It is right to praise and worship him.

Praise and Thanksgiving

Cel: We praise and worship you, O God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All the spiritual powers praise your glory. Burning choirs of cherubim and seraphim take flight to praise you as they sing:

Cong: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your great glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who has come and will come in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

The celebrant continues:

Cel: We offer you this thrice holy hymn, O God, for your holiness is beyond measure. While we were still unworthy, you sent your Son into the world; by dying for us, he gave life to our death.

Narrative of the Eucharistic Institution

The celebrant recites or chants:

Cel: He willed to become a substitute
for the death of us sinners.
And so he took bread in his holy hands,
blessed +
broke and gave it to his disciples,
saying:
Take and eat it:
this is my body.
It summons you
and all who receive it
to eternal life.

Cong: Amen.

The celebrant makes a profound bow and continues:

Cel: In the same way,
he took a cup
and poured in wine and water.
He blessed +
and gave it to his disciples,
saying:
Take and drink from this
all of you:
this is my blood.
It summons you
and all who receive it
to eternal life.

Cong: Amen.

Memorial of the Plan of the Son (Anamnesis)

The celebrant makes a profound bow. He then continues:

Cel: Whenever you celebrate this Mystery, remember my death until I return.

Cong: O God, we remember your death. We witness that you arose from among the dead, and we await your return. May your mercy come upon all of us.

The celebrant crosses his hands over his chest and continues:

Cel: O Lord, we remember your salvific coming. We ask you not to judge us according to our failings on that day of retribution. May we not spend eternity in the dwelling place of shadows, as strangers of your kingdom. But may we take our places with the guests at your wedding feast. For this reason, your Church petitions you, and through and with you, the Father, saying:

Cong: Have mercy on us, almighty God.

Cel: We, your servants, O Lord, realize the graces we have received and thank you for them.

Cong: We praise you; we adore you; we acknowledge and ask of you: have mercy on us, O Lord, and hear us.

Invocation of the Holy Spirit (Epiclesis)

Deacon: How awesome is this moment! The Holy Spirit will descend to sanctify these Mysteries.

The celebrant flutters his hand over the offerings three times as he says silently:

Cel: I implore your mercy, O Lord God. Have mercy on me. Send upon me and upon these offerings the gift of your Holy Spirit. Cleanse me from sin and sustain me at this sacred rite.

The celebrant then kneels on both knees. He kisses the altar after each of the following petitions. He then extends his hands, saying:

Cel: Hear me, O Lord; hear me, O Lord; hear me, O Lord.

Cong: Lord have mercy; Lord have mercy; Lord have mercy.

The celebrant rises and extends his right hand over the bread and blesses it, saying:

Cel: So that, by descending, he may reveal this bread + to be the body of Christ our God.

Cong: Amen.

He then extends his right hand over the cup and
blesses it, saying:

Cel: And make the mixture in this cup + the blood of
Christ our God.

Cong: Amen.

The celebrant extends both hands and continues:

Cel: Through the reception of these Mysteries, may he
grant us pardon of our sins, true understanding of our
faith and participation in his new life.

Cong: Amen.

Intercessions

SIT

*The deacon or other minister prays the interces-
sions below, or he may choose to compose interces-
sions which better suit the occasion and needs of
the local community. The first intercession for the
Church in general is reserved for the celebrant.
With extended hands, he prays:*

Cel: O Lord, grant that your Church and her pastors may
walk in your ways all the days of their lives. In par-
ticular, we remember _____, the Pope of Rome, _____,
our Patriarch, and _____, our Bishop.

Cong: Lord have mercy.

Deacon: Come to the aid of all who call upon you with true
faith. Visit them for the sake of your holy name.

Cong: Lord have mercy.

Deacon: Grant us freedom from war and disturbances; maintain peace and tranquility among your people, that they may worship you with joy.

Cong: Lord have mercy.

Deacon: Remember the apostles and the saints who followed in their footsteps. We especially call to mind the holy, glorious and blessed Mary, Mother of God, St. _____, and all the saints.

Cong: Lord have mercy.

Deacon: O Lord, remember our spiritual predecessors, those who gave birth to the faith in us, and those who instructed us according to its precepts. Grant your Church worthy teachers and zealous instructors; preserve their faith from one generation to the next.

Cong: Lord have mercy.

Deacon: Look with love upon N., and N., whom you have crowned today. Grant them the blessings of joy, peace, and long life together.

Cong: Lord have mercy.

Special intentions may be added at this point.

Deacon: Through this sacrifice, have mercy on the faithful departed who have gone to rest in the true faith, especially _____. Make us worthy of the good things for those who love you.

Cong: Grant rest, O Lord, to the faithful departed.

Final Doxology

The celebrant concludes:

Cel: O Lord, forgive our shortcomings and turn your face from our failures. Protect your people who are beset by the enemies of your name. In your fatherly care, rescue us, reassure us and raise our hopes, and we will praise you, now and forever.

Cong: As it was, is now and shall be forever. Amen.

COMMUNION RITE

Fraction and Consignation

The celebrant blesses the congregation with the hand cross, saying:

Cel: May the mercy of the glorious God + our Savior Jesus Christ, be with you, forever.

Cong: Amen.

The deacon chants the third diaconal proclamation proper to the liturgical celebration, "Again and again, through this holy oblation..."

The celebrant raises the host over the cup and says:

Cel: We have believed and we have offered, and now we seal, sign + and break this oblation.

He breaks the host and places half on the paten; he breaks a particle from the remaining half and dips it in the cup. He blesses the cup with it saying:

We sign + the cup of salvation and thanksgiving with the purifying ember which glows with heavenly Mysteries.

He then makes three crosses on the halves on the paten with the particle. He begins on the top of the larger piece, then on the smaller portion and finally on the lower part of the larger portion, saying:

**In the name of the Father who is the life of all living +
In the name of the Son who proceeds from him to
restore them life +
And in the name of the Holy Spirit + the beginning,
end and perfection of all things.**

He places the particle into the cup and continues:

Cel: You have united, O Lord, your divinity with our humanity and our humanity with your divinity; your life with our mortality and our mortality with your life. You have assumed what is ours, and you have given us what is yours for the life and salvation of our souls. To you be glory, forever.

Cong: Father of truth, behold your Son, a sacrifice pleasing to you. Accept this offering of him who died for me. Behold his blood shed on Golgotha for my salvation; it pleads for me. For his sake, accept my offering. Many are my sins, but greater is your mercy. When placed on a scale, your mercy prevails over the weight of the mountains known only to you. Consider the sin and consider the atonement; the atonement is greater and exceeds the sin. Your beloved Son sustained the nails and the lance because of my sins, so in his sufferings, you are satisfied and I live.

Glory be to the Father who sent his Son for our sake;
adoration to the Son who, by his crucifixion, redeemed
us; thanksgiving to the Holy Spirit, through whom the
mystery of our salvation was brought to fullness.

Blessed is God who, in his love, gave us life. To him be
glory. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

STAND

The celebrant extends his hands and says:

Cel: Lord and true Father, you came to us and taught us the
way of salvation through your Son. Once again, Lord,
come among us with your grace and make us worthy to
address you as sons and daughters as we say:

Cong: Our Father, who are in heaven,
hallowed be your name;
your kingdom come;
your 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 the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

The celebrant concludes with the Embolism:

Cel: O Lord, free us from temptaion and help us to do your
will. Rescue us from those who would destroy us and
keep us from our own destruction. For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are yours, now and forever.

Cong: Amen.

Penitential Rite

Cel: Peace be with you.

Cong: And also with you.

Deacon: Let us bow our heads to the Lord.

Cong: We bow before you, O Lord.

*The celebrant, touching the consecrated offerings,
extends his hand over the congregation, saying:*

Cel: O God of majesty, bless those who bow before you.
May they be worthy to participate in these holy
Mysteries and to praise you, now and forever.

Cong: Amen.

Deacon: Let us look to God with faith.

Invitation to Communion

The following psalm-prayer is optional and silent:

Cel: Holy are you, almighty God of hosts. Heaven and earth are filled with your glory. I raise my eyes to you. As the eyes of the servants look to their lords, so our eyes look to you for mercy. Have mercy, O Lord, in your goodness, and in your great mercy, wipe away my sins. My soul hopes in you, and in your shadow, I take refuge. Because man has trampled me, O Lord, deliver me and make me victorious.

The celebrant then raises his voice and says:

Remember me, O Lord, when you come into your kingdom.

The celebrant bows and takes the paten in his right hand and the cup in his left. He crosses the right arm over the left, raises the offerings and says or chants:

Cel: Holy things for the holy, with perfection purity and sanctity.

Cong: One holy Father; one holy Son; one Holy Spirit. Blessed be the name of the Lord, for he is one in heaven and on earth, to him be glory, forever.

The celebrant makes the sign of the cross, bows and strikes his chest, saying:

Cel: Sanctify our bodies, O Lord, with your holy body and purify our souls with your forgiving blood.

OR

Make me worthy, O Lord, to receive your sacred body and precious blood. They will be my strength to avoid sin, to walk in the path of justice and nourishment for eternal life. Amen.

Communion

The celebrant receives communion by intinction. He takes half of the large host from the paten and dips it into the cup. Before receiving, he says:

Cel: May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ be for the forgiveness of sins and for eternal life, that I may walk in the way of truth.

If the celebrant chooses, he may bless the congregation with the hand cross, saying:

Cel: Your servants and worshipers await your gifts of life. Bless + them with your victorious cross and protect them from evil. O Lord our God, to you be glory, forever.

Cong: Your glory, O Lord, is exalted above the heavens and in the whole universe.

The celebrant raises the paten and cup:

Cel: Our Lord said: "I am the life-giving bread. Whoever receives me in faith inherits life."

The celebrant, deacon or other minister distributes the eucharist under both species using intinction. He says to each person:

Cel: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are given to you for eternal life.

The communicant responds: **Amen.**

During communion, the congregation sings a suitable hymn.

After communion, the celebrant raises the paten over the cup, faces the congregation and says:

Cel: We render always glory and thanksgiving to you, O Lord, for giving us your body to eat and your blood to drink.

Cong: O Lover of all people, have mercy on us.

Thanksgiving

SIT

The celebrant, deacon or other minister consumes what remains of the offerings. The ablutions usually follow at this point. However, if it is more convenient, they may be done after the liturgy; the vessels are covered with the veil and set aside.

If the ablutions are performed at this time, they may be done by the celebrant, deacon or subdeacon who says the following prayer silently:

Cel: May God with the angels and saints accept the sacrifice we have offered and give peace to the faithful departed. Guard me, O Lord, from all evil and protect me forever.

OR

Wipe away my faults, O Lord, with the sponge of your mercy. And in your kindness, forgive the sins which I have committed. O King of heaven and giver of life, grant that I may serve in your eternal kingdom with your loved one, the pure and the just, forever.

The celebrant then says the prayer of thanksgiving:

Cel: All glory and thanksgiving to you, O Lord. Through these divine Mysteries, you have planted in us the bright flame of your own life. Save us from the darkness that never ends, that we may praise you, now and forever.

Cong: Amen.

Deacon: Let us bow to receive the Lord's blessing.

Cong: Make us worthy, O Lord.

DISMISSAL

STAND

The celebrant blesses the couple, saying:

Cel: May the Lord God accompany you from his holy temple
and protect you in body and soul.

May he protect you from the snares of the devil
and deliver you from the deceits of the wicked.

After a long and happy life
may he make you worthy to hear from him
these words of joy:

"Come, blessed of my Father, and inherit eternal life."

*He then makes the sign of the cross over them with
the hand cross, saying:*

Father, Son + and Holy Spirit.

Cong: Amen.

