

Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral

The Holy Mystery of Marriage



Planning Your Wedding Ceremony



SAINT SOPHIA GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

THE REVEREND STEVEN P. ZORZOS, D.MIN., PROTOPRESBYTER & PRESIDING PRIEST
THE REVEREND PANAYIOTIS V. STEELE, M.DIV., PRESBYTER & ASSISTANT PRIEST



GREETINGS IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD!

Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral shares the joy of your impending marriage and wedding ceremony. Through the Holy Mystery of Marriage, a couple is blessed by the presence of Christ, as was the married couple in Cana of Galilee, and filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit to begin their life together in the Holy Orthodox Church, the Body of Christ. As such, marriage is conceived within Orthodoxy as a vehicle of salvation.

Enclosed you will find information regarding your wedding and marriage in the Church, as well as forms to complete in order to schedule the sacrament and provide us necessary information to prepare your Ecclesiastical Marriage License. Please complete these forms carefully, as soon as possible, and return them to the Cathedral office, either via postal mail: Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Attention: Pete Panagiotopoulos, Cathedral Administrator at 2815 36th Street and Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C., 20007, or email: ptpoulos@saintsophiadc.com.

We look forward to helping you prepare for your wedding day and to serving you in solemn prayer and joyous celebration of this most holy sacrament.

May GOD grant you both many years!

The Cathedral Clergy and Administrative Staff

PROCEDURES FOR SCHEDULING YOUR WEDDING

- [1.] **INITIAL CONTACT:** Initial contact is usually made by the couple, either by telephone or email. A wedding packet is sent electronically via email, or by printed copy via postal mail. The couple completes the enclosed scheduling and information sheets (see FORMS A & B below) and returns them to the Cathedral office as soon as possible. A folder is created into which all returning paperwork and pertinent documentation will be placed.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Throughout the course of months preceding the wedding, the couple should plan to meet in person with the officiating Cathedral clergy for a minimum of three (3) meetings. Typically, the first meeting is an opportunity for the couple and priest to: a) become more intimately acquainted, b) review the specific requirements and procedures of this wedding packet to ensure understanding and compliance (it MUST be thoroughly reviewed by the couple beforehand), c) discuss the particulars of the wedding ceremony and participation of the wedding party, and d) answer any questions and/or concerns the couple might have. The second meeting is devoted to the theology of marriage in general, and the couple's personal relationship in particular. The third and final meeting before the wedding consists of the finalization of wedding plans, the compilation of all pertinent civil and ecclesial documents, and the submission of the Application for an Ecclesiastical Marriage License to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in New York.

- [2.] **THE SCHEDULING SHEET (FORM A):** The scheduling sheet (FORM A) is reviewed by the Cathedral clergy, who then schedule the date and time based on careful

consideration of the Orthodox ecclesiastical calendar, including fast days, fasting seasons, major feast days of the Church, and previously scheduled services and sacraments. Specifically, weddings are not permitted: September 14 (Exaltation of the Holy Cross), December 13-25 (Nativity), January 5 and 6 (Theophany), Great Lent and Holy Week, Pascha (Easter), Pentecost, August 1-15 (Dormition Fast and Feast), and August 29 (Beheading of St. John the Baptist). Also, weddings are not scheduled during wider community events, such as the Saint Sophia Festival.

The Cathedral clergy try to honor one of the three requested dates, beginning with the first. If none can be scheduled, the Cathedral clergy directly contact the couple in order to seek possible alternative dates and times. **PLEASE NOTE:** NO date or time is considered final until approved by the Cathedral clergy. Therefore, NO plans should be finalized by the couple, including those involving the deposit or down payment of monies for reception venues, until final approval is given. Once the Cathedral clergy have approved the date and time, the wedding may be scheduled.

- [3.] **COUPLE'S INFORMATION SHEET (FORM B):** The couple's information sheet (FORM B) must be filled out completely (Please see "IMPORTANT PRECONDITIONS FOR MARRIAGE WITHIN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH" below). It is used by the Cathedral clergy to prepare the Application for an Ecclesiastical Marriage License. After submission of this application to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in New York, an ecclesiastical marriage license is issued. Upon completion of the sacrament, the ecclesiastical marriage license will be signed by the Orthodox Sponsor (Koumbaros or Koumbara) and officiating clergyman, and then resubmitted to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese to be entered into the permanent registry. Finally, the Archdiocese issues an original *Ecclesiastical Certificate of Marriage* to the newly married couple.

IMPORTANT PRECONDITIONS FOR MARRIAGE WITHIN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH (Please see the "Pastoral Guidelines" of the *Yearbook of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America*): 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 Archbishop or Metropolitan.

Before requesting permission from the Archbishop or his Metropolitan to perform the marriage, a Priest must verify that:

- a) neither of the parties in question is already married to another person, 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 [a degree less (or closer) than the third (3rd), or third cousins];
- 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); and

- e) a civil marriage license has been obtained from civil authorities.
2. No person may marry more than three times in the Church, with permission for a third marriage granted only with extreme *oikonomia* (economy, i.e., ecclesiastical discretion).
 3. In cases involving the marriage of Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christians, the latter must have been baptized with a Trinitarian baptism, in water, in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

***IMPORTANT NOTE:** A non-Orthodox Christian who marries an Orthodox Christian in the Orthodox Church 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 Name of the Holy Trinity, following a period of instruction, by Chrismation.

Also, 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 sacramental 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 members' religious and spiritual well-being.

4. The couple should be willing to baptize their children in the Orthodox Church and raise and nurture them in accordance with the Orthodox Faith.

Prohibited Marriages:

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 and second cousins (any combination) 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.

- [4.] **THE CIVIL MARRIAGE LICENSE:** No wedding may be celebrated without the prior submission of a civil marriage license from the District of Columbia, or in the case of those already civilly married, a copy of the issued civil marriage license of the County and State in which they were civilly married. For those seeking a civil marriage license for the first time*, application for the marriage license must be made in person by the contracting parties from the Marriage License Bureau of the Family Court of the District of Columbia located at: 500 Indiana Avenue, NW, Room 4485, Washington, DC 20001. Main contact telephone number: 202-879-4840; online links:
<http://www.dccourts.gov/dccourts/superior/family/marriage.jsp> ;
http://www.dcwed.com/html/marriage_laws.html

*Those couples already civilly married, whether in the District of Columbia or in another state, must provide a photocopy of their civil marriage license. This photocopy may be delivered to Saint Sophia Cathedral either by postal mail, fax, or email (see above). Also, the couple must fill out “Supplemental Marriage Form 165” (page 14 below).

Either the newly obtained District of Columbia civil marriage license or the photocopy of the civil license of those already married, must be received by the Cathedral Office no later than thirty (30) days before the date of the wedding in order for the sacrament to proceed as scheduled. Also, at this time, the third and final meeting between the couple and officiating priest will take place, and application will be made to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of New York for an Ecclesiastical Marriage License.

No application for an ecclesiastical marriage license can be made without prior submission of a civil marriage license.

- [5.] **PARISHIONER(S) IN GOOD STANDING:** “Good standing” refers to both ecclesiastical and financial status. The Uniform Parish Regulations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (Article 18, Section 1) define a parishioner as: “Every person who is baptized and chrismated according to the rites of the Orthodox Church. The religious, social and moral duties of a parishioner are to apply the tenets of the Orthodox Faith to his/her life and to: adhere to and live according to the tenets of the Orthodox Faith: faithfully attend the Divine Liturgy and other worship services; participate regularly in the holy sacraments; respect all ecclesiastical authority and all governing bodies of the Church; be obedient in matters of the Faith, practice and ecclesiastical order; contribute towards the progress of the Church’s sacred mission; and be an effective witness and example of the Orthodox Faith and Traditions to all people.” Furthermore, “a parishioner in good standing must: be eighteen years of age or over; be current in his or her stewardship and other financial obligations to the Parish,” and “cooperate in every way towards the welfare and well being of the Parish.”
- [6.] **FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS OF PARISHIONERS IN GOOD STANDING:** A primary privilege of Parish stewardship is full participation in the sacramental life of the Church. Hence, parishioners in good standing with Saint Sophia Cathedral — those current in “stewardship and other financial obligations to the Parish”— may schedule a wedding. If both parties are Orthodox, they must become family members in good standing of Saint Sophia Cathedral. If only one party is Orthodox, s/he must be an individual steward in good standing of Saint Sophia Cathedral. * **Stewards in good standing must only pay the Sacrament Usage fee \$300.00.**
- [7.] **FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS OF NON-PARISHIONERS:** If neither party is a member in good standing of Saint Sophia Cathedral, a \$3,000.00 Cathedral Sanctuary Usage fee is required. This fee offsets some of the expenses of clergy, chanter, and sexton, as well as the Cathedral overhead costs involved in opening and closing the church building on that day.*

Stewardship Type: Saint Sophia Stewards are expected to carefully review their personal circumstances and make a commitment of time, talent, and treasure to support our Parish and her Ministries. Saint Sophia encourages new members to consider stewardship when joining our community. The annual cost to operate the Cathedral and fund her many ministries for calendar year 2020 is \$2,310 per steward. We encourage those who can meet this commitment amount,

or even exceed it, to do so. However, we equally welcome any stewardship contribution below this level. We welcome ALL with open arms and open hearts.

All financial obligations to the Parish must be recorded by the Cathedral office no later than thirty (30) days before the date of the wedding in order for the sacrament to proceed as scheduled. *

***IMPORTANT NOTE:** In cases of extreme financial hardship, and upon confidential consultation with the Cathedral clergy, necessary adjustment to the above Parish financial obligation fee schedule can be made. No couple will be refused the sacrament of marriage based solely on their inability to totally fulfill Parish financial obligations.

[8.] **THE ORTHODOX SPONSOR (Koumbaros or Koumbara):** The Orthodox Sponsor (Koumbaros or Koumbara) must:

1. Be a baptized Orthodox or chrismated Christian.
2. Be thirteen years of age or older.
3. If married, be married in the Orthodox Church. Please note, according to Orthodox Canon Law, only ONE individual is permitted to act as Sponsor. The ONLY exception to this canonical rule is the case of a MARRIED COUPLE who are BOTH Orthodox Christians, and who are thus defined by the Church through the sacrament of marriage as ONE individual.
4. If divorced, MUST have received an ecclesiastical divorce.
5. Be a member in good standing with Saint Sophia Cathedral (Please see the "Pastoral Guidelines" of the *Yearbook of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America*: "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"). If the Sponsor is *not* a member of Saint Sophia Cathedral, s/he must obtain a letter from the priest of his/her home parish affirming membership in good standing of *that* parish. This letter may be delivered to Saint Sophia Cathedral either by postal mail or email (see above) and must be received no later than thirty (30) days before the scheduled date of the wedding.

***IMPORTANT NOTE:** 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. Also, non-Orthodox Christian and persons of other Faiths may be members of the wedding party but may not exchange the rings or crowns.

[9.] **NECESSARY ITEMS FOR THE WEDDING CEREMONY:** Traditionally, the Sponsor provides at least some of the following items for the wedding (in contemporary practice however, the couple, or a family member, provides most, if not all, of them):

1. The wedding rings for both Bride and Groom.
 2. The STEFANA, or Orthodox Marriage Crowns.*
 3. Two white candles of medium size, typically decorated with ribbons, tulle, or trimming of some kind. LAMBATHES, or inordinately large candles, are unnecessarily difficult to work with, and as such, are not recommended.*
 4. A silver tray for the gospel book and crowns.*
 5. White Jordan almonds (small amount), traditionally strewn on the silver tray.*
- *The marriage crowns (stefana), candles, silver tray, and Jordan almonds will be returned to the couple immediately following the completion of the sacrament.

[10.] **IMPORTANT GENERAL INFORMATION:**

1. **BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATES:** The prospective Bride and Groom **MUST** provide photocopies of their individual baptismal certificates, and in the case of a non-Orthodox Christian, a baptismal certificate indicating a Trinitarian baptism with water, in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The baptismal certificates **MUST** be received by the Cathedral office no later than thirty (30) days before the date of the wedding, for the scheduled third and final meeting between the couple and the officiating priest, when application to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese for an Ecclesiastical Marriage License will be made. They may be sent via postal mail, fax, or email (see above). ***No application for an ecclesiastical marriage license can be made without prior submission of the baptismal certificates.***
2. **BRIDAL AND BRIDESMAID ATTIRE:** Please be reminded that the Sacrament of Marriage takes place within the sacred space of the Cathedral Sanctuary. The Bride and Bridesmaids are expected to select gowns or dresses with utmost consideration to propriety of attire within the sacred space of the church. Shawls (or other styles of shoulder covering) are recommended, if shoulders are bare.
3. **WEDDING REHEARSAL:** Typically, the rehearsal date and time is scheduled many months in advance, usually concurrently with the scheduling of the wedding ceremony. The Bride, Groom, and entire wedding party (including ushers not also serving as groomsmen) **MUST** arrive on time. There is much to review and practice, and everyone should be prepared to pay close attention and avoid excessive talking. On average, the wedding rehearsal requires one full hour.
4. **OFFICIAL SEATING OF PARENTS:** Traditionally, immediately before the start of the processional, the parents (and sometimes the grandparents) of the couple are officially seated, escorted by groomsmen. To save time, the couple should decide in advance of the wedding rehearsal which groomsmen are to serve as escorts and whom each will escort and seat.
5. **FORMAL INVITATION OF CLERGY:** In the instance when the family wishes to invite the Cathedral clergy to a wedding reception following the sacrament, a formal invitation is to be sent to their home address, as is the case with all other guests. If scheduling and prior commitments permit, the Cathedral clergy are at times able to attend. However, a verbal invitation offered either a few days earlier, or on the day of the wedding itself, will not be honored.
6. **CO-CELEBRATION OF VISITING CLERGY:** It is sometimes the case that a couple has a prior relationship with clergy of another Greek Orthodox parish within the Greek Archdiocese, or of another Orthodox jurisdiction, either here or abroad. The couple may invite a priest from another parish to participate in the sacrament, but it is the couple's express responsibility to notify the Cathedral clergy well in advance, as well as to remind the guest clergyman that he must also contact us, well in advance of the wedding day. Ecclesial documentation properly identifying the canonical status of the priest, issued by his presiding bishop, must be presented to the Cathedral clergy before permission to concelebrate the sacrament can be granted. As with all other documentation, this must be submitted no later than thirty (30) days before the date of the wedding in order for the sacrament to proceed as scheduled.

7. **FINAL PAPERWORK AND DOCUMENTATION:** Once the sacrament has been Completed, the ecclesiastical marriage license is signed by both the Orthodox Sponsor (Koumbaros or Koumbara) and officiating clergyman and then resubmitted to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese to be entered into the permanent registry. Finally, an original *Ecclesiastical Certificate of Marriage* is issued by the Archdiocese to the newly married couple. This document must not be lost, misplaced, or carelessly damaged in any way, since another cannot be issued in the future.

Finally, the Cathedral clergy complete the civil license in triplicate. The original is issued to the newly married couple and a photocopy of the original is submitted to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese as part of the permanent registry. A second copy is returned to the Marriage Bureau of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for their permanent records. The third and final copy is retained by Saint Sophia Cathedral for our permanent records.

[11] **ON THE DAY OF YOUR WEDDING:**

1. **ARRIVAL TIME:** The Bride, Groom, and entire wedding party **MUST** arrive forty (40) minutes before the scheduled starting time of the wedding. Please do **NOT** forget the stefana (crowns), silver tray, candles, and other necessary items!
2. **FOOD AND BEVERAGES WITHIN THE CATHEDRAL:** With the exception of bottled water, food and beverages of any kind are expressly forbidden. Most especially, the introduction and consumption of alcoholic beverages in the bride's room or groom's side altar room, or any other area of the church building or grounds, is a most disrespectful violation of the sacred space of the Cathedral Sanctuary and will be met with confiscation and serious reprimand.

ORGANIST: The only accompanying instrumentation permitted in the Cathedral during a wedding ceremony is the organ. Those couples desiring the services of Cathedral Organist, may contact us at: jenmaneva@hotmail.com or by phone at: 443.465.2761. The organist fee of \$250 is due thirty (30) days before the scheduled date of the wedding, made directly payable to Jeni Maneva. For more information please visit: www.saintsophiadc.org.

3. **CHANTER:** Saint Sophia Cathedral provides a chanter for the sacrament.
4. **PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY:** Photographs and/or video of the wedding ceremony are permitted, but to only **ONE** designated photographer and/or videographer. The photographer(s) and/or videographer(s) **MUST** arrive forty (40) minutes before the scheduled starting time of the wedding in order to present themselves to the Cathedral clergy for consultation and instruction. To ensure the proper dignity and solemnity of the sacrament, the use of flash photography or video lights is expressly **FORBIDDEN**. Our primary purpose on this day is to initiate the couple into the Holy Mystery of Marriage, **NOT** to create theater. Finally, a maximum time limit of 20 minutes is allocated for picture taking after the completion of the wedding ceremony. This strict Cathedral policy **MUST** be respected and adhered to.
5. **LIVESTREAMING:** If interested in livestreaming the sacrament, please contact Pete at the Cathedral office at 202-838-1553 or by email at ptpoulos@saintsophiadc.com.

6. **FLORIST AND FLORAL CONSIDERATIONS:** Flowers are not a required item for the wedding ceremony. However, many couples choose to provide flowers as decoration. For those who wish to do so, we recommend two floral arrangements for either side of the main altar. Some couples also choose to decorate the pews (either all, every other, or several front pews, on both sides of the center aisle) with either pew bows or flowers. Pews may be decorated, but **WITHOUT** adhesive tape, tacks, nails, staples, or any attachment that might damage the pews in any way. Finally, runners for the center aisle are **NOT** allowed in Saint Sophia Cathedral.

7. **EXITING THE CATHEDRAL:** The throwing of rice, bird seed, koufeta, paper confetti, or solid objects of any kind, poses a serious and potentially dangerous hazard to those descending the front steps of the Cathedral after the wedding and is therefore expressly **FORBIDDEN**. Also, consideration must be given to the plight of the Cathedral sexton, who in preparation for either the next sacrament or the next day's worship service is left alone with the daunting task of clean-up.

“O LORD, OUR GOD, CROWN THEM WITH GLORY AND HONOR.”



Weddings

The Cathedral welcomes the opportunity to unify couples in the Holy Sacrament of Marriage. God is active in our lives. It is He who joins a man and a woman in a relationship of mutual love, and marriage bears witness to His action. Through this Sacrament, a man and a woman are publicly joined as husband and wife. They enter into a new relationship with each other, God, and the Church. Since marriage is not viewed merely as a legal contract, there are no vows. Also, according to Orthodox teachings, marriage is not simply a social institution; it is an eternal vocation of the Kingdom. A husband and a wife are called by the Holy Spirit not only to live together but also to share their Christian life together so that each, with the aid of the other, may grow closer to God and become the persons they are meant to be. In the Marriage Service, after the couple have been betrothed and exchanged rings, they are crowned with "crowns of glory and honor" signifying the establishment of a new family under God. Near the conclusion of the Service, the husband and wife drink from a common cup reminiscent of the wedding feast of Cana, which also symbolizes the sharing of the burdens and joys of their new life together. (Source: [Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America](#))

The Orthodox Wedding Service

The Orthodox sacrament of marriage is unique in many ways, but primarily in that the ceremony has remained almost entirely unchanged since its origination centuries ago. As stated above, the bride and groom do not exchange vows; instead it is their presence before Christ through the priest and the congregation that signifies their wish to be joined and to accept the Lord into their lives and new home. Finally, in the Orthodox tradition, the wedding ceremony is actually two services in one. The first, the briefer of the two, is the Service of Betrothal, during which the rings are exchanged. The second, the Service of Crowning, is longer and includes many prayers offered on behalf of the couple, including the crowning of the bride and groom in marriage, sharing of the common cup and the joyous procession around the altar table.

The Service of Betrothal

During this first service, the priest offers petitions of prayer on behalf of the bride and groom. He then asks God's blessings upon the rings and proceeds to bless the bride and groom with them. Performed three times in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the priest starts first from the groom to the bride, and then from the bride to the groom. The weaving motion of the priest's hand between bride and groom represents their lives being entwined into one. The priest then places the wedding rings on the ring fingers of the right hands of both the bride and groom (the right hand holds special connotations in the Orthodox faith, which is why it is used during the wedding ceremony). Then the sponsor (the koumbaros or koumbara) exchanges the rings over the hands of the bride and groom three times, further emphasizing the union of their lives. The service closes with a final prayer, which seals the placement of rings and emphasizes that the marriage was enacted by God Himself.

The Service of Crowning

The Joining of Hands

The Service of Crowning begins with the invocation of the Holy Trinity. After petitions are offered on behalf of the bride, groom and wedding company, three prayers are read which ascribe to God the institution of marriage and the preservation of His people through the ages. During this prayer the priest joins the right hands of the bride and groom to symbolize the union of the couple through the Lord. Since God is the true Celebrant of every sacrament, the priest always expresses himself in the third person. He is simply God's instrument in the service.

The Crowning

The union of the bride and groom is completed with the Crowning. The priest takes the crowns from the altar table, blesses the bride and groom, and then places the crowns upon their heads, chanting, "O Lord our God, crown them with glory and honor." The crowns have several symbolic meanings: the first that God bestows His blessing upon His children in the form of crowns and the second, that the bride and groom mark the beginning of a new kingdom, reigning supreme under the Divine Authority of God, Who reigns over all. The sponsor exchanges the crowns over the heads of the bride and groom to seal the union. The service continues with the Epistle (Ephesians 5:20-33) and Gospel (John 2:1-11) readings. The Epistle details the responsibilities of each partner in the marriage and the Gospel recounts Christ's first miracle at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee.

The Common Cup

Following the readings and brief prayers, the common cup, containing a small portion of wine, is presented to the bride and groom. The priest blesses the cup, representing the equal share in the cup of life, and offers it to the newly joined husband and wife.

The Procession

The priest then leads the newly joined husband and wife around the table - a type of religious dance, celebrating the union. During the procession, a series of hymns are sung. The first speaks of the Isaiah the Prophet's joy when he saw the coming of the Messiah upon the earth. The second recollects the martyrs of the Faith, who received their crowns of glory from God through the sacrifice of their lives. And finally, the third exalts the Holy Trinity.

The Removal of the Crowns and the Benediction

Upon completion of the procession, the Priest faces the groom and says: "Be magnified, O Bridegroom, as Abraham, and blessed as Isaac, and increased as was Jacob. Go your way in peace, performing in righteousness the commandments of God." After which, the priest turns to the bride and says, "And you, O Bride, be magnified as was Sarah, and rejoiced as was Rebecca, and increased as Rachel, being glad in your husband, keeping the paths of the Law, for so God is well pleased." Then, removing their crowns, the Priest says, "Accept their crowns in Your Kingdom unsoiled and undefiled; and preserve them without offense to the ages of ages." Finally, the priest reads a prayer of benediction and the newly married couple then depart from the church.

SCHEDULING A WEDDING (FORM A)

Groom's Name (First, Middle, Last): _____

1st Marriage Yes No (If no, how many times have you been previously married?): _____

Religion of Baptism (If Protestant, what denomination?): _____

Present religious tradition (same as above or other?): _____

Phone #: (home): _____ (cell): _____ (work): _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zipcode: _____

Will this be your permanent residence once married? Yes No

Email: _____ (other email): _____

Bride's Name (First, Middle, Last): _____

1st Marriage Yes No (If no, how many times have you been previously married?): _____

Religion of Baptism (If Protestant, what denomination?): _____

Present religious tradition (same as above or other?): _____

Phone #: (home): _____ (cell): _____ (work): _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zipcode: _____

Will this be your permanent residence once married? Yes No

Email: _____ (other email): _____

Requested Dates and Times:

1. Year: _____ Month: _____ Day: _____ Time: _____

2. Year: _____ Month: _____ Day: _____ Time: _____

3. Year: _____ Month: _____ Day: _____ Time: _____

COUPLE'S INFORMATION SHEET (FORM B)

PROSPECTIVE GROOM'S INFORMATION

Full Name _____
First Middle Last

Residence _____

Permanent residence once married? Yes No

Age _____ Date of Birth _____

Place of Birth _____

Date of Baptism _____

◇ A copy of your Baptismal Certificate is required

Religion at Baptism _____

If Chrismated into Orthodoxy, date _____

Occupation _____

Father's Name _____

Father's Country of Birth _____

Father's Religion _____

Mother's Maiden Name _____

Mother's Country of Birth _____

Mother's Religion _____

Have you ever been married? No Yes

If Yes: Othodox Church Other Faith Civil Marriage

(Also, if the answer is Yes, please fill out form 165 on page 14 below)

If you were born in a foreign country,
 at what age did you arrive in the United States? _____

Date of Arrival _____

Are you related to the intended Bride by blood?

By Blood: No Yes

Are you related to the intended Bride by marriage?

By Marriage: No Yes

If related by blood or marriage, how?: _____

PROSPECTIVE BRIDE'S INFORMATION

Full Name _____
First Middle Last

Residence _____

Permanent residence once married? Yes No

Age _____ Date of Birth _____

Place of Birth _____

Date of Baptism _____

◇ A copy of your Baptismal Certificate is required

Religion at Baptism _____

If Chrismated into Orthodoxy, date _____

Occupation _____

Father's Name _____

Father's Country of Birth _____

Father's Religion _____

Mother's Maiden Name _____

Mother's Country of Birth _____

Mother's Religion _____

Have you ever been married? No Yes

If Yes: Othodox Church Other Faith Civil Marriage

(Also, if the answer is Yes, please fill out form 165 on page 14 below)

If you were born in a foreign country,
 at what age did you arrive in the United States? _____

Date of Arrival _____

Are you related to the intended Groom by blood?

By Blood: No Yes

Are you related to the intended Groom by marriage?

By Marriage: No Yes

If related by blood or marriage, how?: _____

