

ALL STANDING, a hymn may be sung.

Having entered, the Priest opens the Word and reads the following or other sentence of Scripture:

Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!

Revelation 19: 9

The PEOPLE SITTING, the couple to be betrothed comes forward, the woman at the right hand of the man.

PRIEST: It is according to Divine order that the Rite of Betrothal shall take place before marriage, for in this way consent, which is the essential of marriage, is brought before the Lord and is strengthened and confirmed. You have therefore come forward that you may be betrothed, and so enter into a state of interior preparation for your marriage. Hear, then, what is taught in the Word of the Lord.

The Priest then reads one or more of the following or other selections from the Word.

194 Then Abraham's servant said, "I bowed my head and worshiped the Lord, and blessed the Lord God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the way of truth to take the daughter of my master's brother for his son. Now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me." Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The thing comes from the Lord; we cannot speak to you either bad or good. Here is Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as the Lord has spoken." Then the servant brought out jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. *Genesis 24: 48-53*

195 Thus says the Lord: "I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your betrothal, when you went after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness to the Lord, the firstfruits of His increase." *Jeremiah 2: 2, 3*

196 I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in justice and judgment, in lovingkindness and mercy; I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord. *Hosea 2: 19, 20*

197 Jerusalem, you shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will name. You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the

bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

Isaiah 62: 2, 3, 5

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of **198** heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Then one of the seven angels came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. *Revelation 21: 2, 9–11*

"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. **199** I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. *Revelation 22: 16, 17*

The marriage of good and truth is from the marriage of the Lord with the **200** Church, and this is from the marriage of love and wisdom in the Lord; for good pertains to love, and truth to wisdom. *DP 21*

Betrothals before marriage have been in use from ancient times and represented the conjunction of good and truth in the internal person. From **201** this it is evident what is meant in the Word by betrothing, and also what is meant by bridegroom and bride; for by betrothing is signified the first conjunction of good and truth, which is of the internal person apart from the external. Betrothal therefore represents the agreement of dispositions or of minds which precedes marriage. *AC 9182: 4, 5; 8996*

It is proper on earth for a priest to perform betrothals and to hear, receive, **202** confirm, and consecrate the consent. The consent is the essential element in marriage, and the rest of the things that follow are its formalities. *CL 21: 4*

Conjugal love in its essence is nothing else but the wish of two to be one, **203** in other words, a will on their part that their two lives become one life. To carry out that will is the constant endeavor of this love, and all that it does flows from it. *CL 215*

By betrothal the mind of one is joined to the mind of the other, so that a **204** marriage of the spirit takes place before a marriage of the body. Reasons for formal betrothals are as follows:

1. To encourage a mutual inclination of the couple's souls to each other following betrothal.
2. To encourage a determination of a general love for the opposite sex to the one of the sex.

3. To encourage a mutual recognition of each other's inward affections and a conjunction of those affections through appeals to them in the inner exhilaration of love.
4. To encourage a marriage of the couple's spirits and a closer and closer affiliation of these.
5. To encourage in this way a proper progression of conjugal love from its first warmth to its nuptial flame.
6. Consequently, to encourage a just and orderly progression and development of conjugal love from its spiritual origin. *CL 303, 301*

205 By betrothal each is made ready for conjugal love. By betrothal the mind or spirit of one is made ready for union with the mind or spirit of the other, or to say the same thing, the love of one with the love of the other. We should add also the following, that by the order engraved on it, truly conjugal love ascends and descends. It ascends from its first warmth progressively upward toward people's souls in an effort to form conjunctions there, and this by continually more interior openings of their minds. There is, moreover, no love which strives for these openings more intensely, or which opens the interior recesses of minds more forcefully and adeptly, than conjugal love; for it is the soul in each which impels it. On the other hand, in the very same moments that this love ascends toward the soul, it also descends toward the body and clothes itself in it. *CL 302: 1*

206 The mind of each is prepared for conjugal love by betrothal, although in various ways depending on their affections. *CL 302: 2*

207 The Lord's Divine providence is most specific and therefore most universal in connection with marriages and in its operation in marriages in heaven, because all blessings of heaven flow from the delights of conjugal love, like sweet waters from a sweetly gushing spring. It is therefore provided by the Lord that conjugal pairs be born, and they are raised and continually prepared for their marriages, neither the boy nor the girl being aware of the fact. Then, after a period of time, the girl—now a marriageable young woman—and the boy—now a young man able to marry—meet somewhere, as though by fate, and notice each other. And they immediately recognize, as if by a kind of instinct, that they are a match, thinking to themselves from a kind of inner dictate, the young man, "she is mine," and the young woman, "he is mine." Later, after this thought has for some time become settled in the minds of each, they deliberately talk about it together and pledge themselves to each other in marriage. We say as though by fate and as if by instinct, when we mean Divine providence, because when one is unaware that it is Divine providence, that is how it appears. *CL 316: 3*

The souls of two unite when love for the opposite sex is confined to one of the sex—as happens when a young woman has pledged herself wholly to a young man and the young man conversely has pledged himself wholly to the young woman—and this is clearly apparent from the fact that their two lives unite, and so consequently their souls, because these are their life in its beginnings. Conjugal love in this, its highest seat, is spiritual, holy and pure, because the soul of every person from its origin is celestial. Consequently it receives influx from the Lord directly, for it receives from Him a marriage of love and wisdom or good and truth, and this influx makes the person a human being and sets him apart from animals. From this union of souls, where it exists in its spiritual holiness and purity, conjugal love flows down into the life of the entire body and fills it with blessed delights, so long as its course remains open, as is the case in people who from the Lord become spiritual. 208

CL 482

The New Church is called the bride and wife, and the Lord its Bridegroom and Husband; and here at the end of the Apocalypse, the Lord speaks and the church speaks, as the Bridegroom and the bride; the Lord speaks these words: “Surely, I come quickly. Amen”; and the church speaks these: “Yea, come, Lord Jesus,” which are words of betrothing to the spiritual marriage. 209

AR 960

The PRIEST addresses the man and the woman by their Christian names, and says:

Will you now, in the presence of the Lord, declare your undivided love for each other, and your desire to be led and taught by Him?

COUPLE: I will.

The PRIEST addresses the man by his Christian name, and says:

(*Man's name*): Will you betroth (*woman's name*), that you may be conjoined with her in spirit, and be prepared by the Lord for the holy state of marriage?

MAN: I will.

The PRIEST addresses the woman by her Christian name, and says:

(*Woman's name*): Will you betroth (*man's name*) that you may be conjoined with him in spirit, and be prepared by the Lord for the holy state of marriage?

WOMAN: I will.

Rings or other pledges may here be exchanged.

The PRIEST may say the following or other statement of dedication:

May (this pledge/these pledges) be a sign of your mutual consent, and your desire to be one in spirit and in all purposes of life before the Lord.

PRIEST: Let us pray.

ALL KNEELING, the Priest offers the following or other prayer:

O Lord Jesus Christ, You are Love Itself and Wisdom Itself. From You is all conjugal love with angels and with people on earth; descend, we pray, into the minds and hearts of these Your servants. Establish and confirm their betrothal; incline their hearts to each other, that they may be more and more consociated in spirit and in life. May the thought of their hearts ascend as one to You; may they know and love You as their only God and Lord. Draw near to them and lead them in the way of heavenly joy and peace. Amen.

ALL: Our Father, who art in the heavens, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven so upon the earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Matthew 6: 9–13

The PEOPLE STANDING, the COUPLE STILL KNEELING, the Priest lays his hands on their heads and says:

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

Numbers 6: 24–26

The COUPLE STANDING, the Priest may say:

By this act of betrothal you have, in the presence of the Lord, confirmed your mutual love and your desire to be led by Him; and before angels and those assembled here you have put on the name and state of bridegroom and bride. In this state, which the Lord Himself has ordained as preparation for the full joys of marriage, He will be with you, more and more closely conjoining your spirits in heavenly union. Meditate upon the uses of betrothal described in the Word; search out, one with the other, those interior affections you cherish; consider their application to your life together as you delight in the inward cheerfulness of love. In this way your love will progress in proper order from its first warmth even to the nuptial flame. May the Lord's blessing rest upon you, and may you receive from Him love truly conjugal, which is the precious jewel of human life. Amen.

ALL STANDING, a musical selection may be sung.

The Priest pronounces the Benediction, closes the Word, and retires.