

**Liturgy for Marriage  
between a Catholic and  
a non-Christian Partner  
(Disparity of Cult)**

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Syro-Malabar Bishops' Synod

## Foreword

The Syro-Malabar Bishops' Synod had authorized the Liturgical Commission (18-29 August 2008) to prepare a Text for the celebration of the marriage between a Syro-Malabar Catholic and a non-Christian partner (Disparity of Cult). Based on the Synodal decision, the Liturgical Commission, with the help of experts presented a draft text to the Synod of the Syro-Malabar Bishops in January 2011. That draft text was approved with minor modifications and corrections. As per the decree issued by the Major Archbishop, Mar George Alencherry on 15 November 2012, the original text was published and the English translation of the same is now made available.

This liturgical text is published taking into consideration a pressing pastoral need of the time. The marriage between a Catholic and a non-Christian is not a sacrament (CCEO c.776 §2). Therefore, the celebratory elements indicative of a sacrament are not included in the text. Disparity of cult marriage requires a dispensation from the local hierarchy.

Some of the prayers and rubrics particular to the Syro-Malabar marriage liturgy are retained in this Text. This liturgy is designed also to address the non-Christian who is expressing the willingness to participate in the Christian religious celebrations. The commitment by the Catholic partner to get the children baptized in the Catholic Church and to ensure their Catholic upbringing to the best of his/her ability is made known to the non-Christian partner. Through this ceremony, the non-Christian partner is invited to appreciate the Christian doctrine and rituals. Hence, the basic tenets of Christian faith and references to the Scripture are included in this text.

Considering the presence of the non-Christian partner, prayers are simplified. In the prayers, the Holy Trinity is addressed as God Almighty.

We hope that this liturgy will assist the Christian faithful who, under the extraordinary circumstances, marry the non-Christian partners, to maintain their faith life in Christ.

1, April 2022.

**✠ Mar Thomas Elavanal**  
Chairman, Syro-Malabar Liturgy Commission

## DECREE

With the approval of the Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church in its session held from 10 to 14 January 2011, the Syro-Malabar Church has been using the Malayalam text for the marriage of a Catholic partner with a non-Christian partner from 6 January 2013. Now the undersigned George Cardinal Alencherry, the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church promulgates the English translation of the same text to be effective from 24 April 2022 and with the same Act declares that all other texts in English hitherto in use for administering the above-mentioned rites stand abrogated from 24 April 2022.

All Contrary dispositions notwithstanding.

Given from the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Curia at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad on 5 April 2022.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "George Alencherry".

✠ George Cardinal Alencherry  
Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church

## **Norms for Marriage ritual involving a Catholic and a non-Christian partner (Disparity of Cult)**

1. This ritual is to be performed only under extra-ordinary circumstances.
2. This is not a sacrament, (CCEO c.776 §2) but a sacramental. Therefore, no element that is specific to a sacrament is present in it. The ritual is not celebrated together with the Holy Qurbana.
3. It is not acceptable to incorporate rituals of other religions (syncretism) to this ceremony.
4. The ceremony presupposes the readiness of the non-Christian partner to participate in a Christian ritual.
5. Since the non-Christian partner is likely to be familiar with “Thalikettu” (Tying the Thali), “Manthrakodi” (Bridal saree), exchange of rings, garlanding and lighting of the lamp (Nilavilakku), they are included in this ritual.
6. The celebrant of this ritual is a Catholic priest.
7. Since the Church laws associated with the dispensation of the “Disparity of Cult” are the Church’s procedures, it is clear that the Church laws related to marriage (CCEO c. 780 §1) are directly applicable to the Catholic partner and indirectly (CCEO c. 814 nos. 2, 3) to the non-Christian partner.
8. The following are the conditions to get dispensation to marry a partner, who is not baptized (CCEO c. 813; 814 nos. 1, 3):
  - i. The Catholic party declares that he/she is prepared to remove dangers of falling away from the faith and makes a sincere promise to do all in his/her power to have all the children baptized and educated in the Catholic Church.

- ii. The non-Christian partner is to be informed in good time of these promises that the Catholic party has to make. This is to assure that the non-Catholic partner is well aware of these promises and obligations of the Catholic partner.
- iii. Both parties are to be instructed on the essential ends and properties of marriage, which are not to be excluded by either spouse.

## General Instructions

1. The priest puts on *Kothina*, *Sunara*, *Urara*, *Sande* and *Paina*.
2. In front of the Bema, there should be a table to place the Thali, Manthrkodi, Rings, garland and the like.
3. The oil lamp for lighting during the ceremony is placed nearby.
4. The blessing before the Gospel reading should be done with the Gospel lectionary.
5. Readings may be four, three or two. In case of only two readings, the first one should be from the Epistle.



## The Order of the Liturgy of the Syro-Malabar Church for the Marriage with a Catholic and a non-Christian Partner (Disparity of Cult)

The bride and groom, their families and friends enter the church through the main door and approach the bema. The priest with the altar servers enters the sanctuary in procession. During this, the entrance song below is sung.

**Man and woman God has created  
On this earth He let them be  
When the love of God flows in them  
Their hearts join and become one.**

**As partakers in creation  
God has invited all men  
They share love and become one  
Their union is a great mystery.**

**We gather with hearts of joy  
With prayers, in this holy place  
May God shower His grace on you  
May love blossom and bear fruit.**

**C:** Glory to God in the highest. (3)

**A:** Amen. (3)

**C:** Peace and hope to people on earth, always and forever.

**A:** Amen.

**C:** Our Father in heaven,

**A:** Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Holy, holy, holy are You. Our Father in heaven, heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Angels and people sing out to You: Holy, holy, holy are You. Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your

name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day the bread we need. Forgive us our debts and sins as we have forgiven those who offended us. Do not let us fall into temptation; but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

**C:** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**A:** From eternity and forever. Amen.

**C:** Our Father in heaven,

**A:** Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Holy, holy, holy are You. Our Father in heaven, the heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Angels and people sing out to You: Holy, holy, holy are You.

**D:** Let us pray. Peace be with us.

**C:** O Lord God, help this couple to be united in Holy Matrimony and bless them to live in the union of hearts and to form an ideal family, observing Your commandments. The Lord of all, forever.

**A:** **Amen.**

### Hymn Psalms 45 & 128

(Thuyae ...)

**C:** Hear, O daughter, consider,  
and incline your ear to me  
forget your people and father's house,  
that the King might long your beauty.

**A:** **Rejoice, O Church, the Savior's spouse.  
Eternal God has chosen you  
As His spouse by divine love  
He is your Lord, honour him.**

**C:** The King's daughter is glorious  
Gold threaded is her raiment  
She is filled in all beauty  
Her maids all accompany her.

**A:** **They are led with joy and cheer  
Into the king's dwelling place  
Your name be made renowned  
Through all the generations.**

**C:** Blessed is he who fears the Lord  
His wife will be a fruitful vine  
And children like young olives  
At the table in your house.

**A:** **May Lord bless you from Zion  
All the days of your living  
Rejoice, O Church, Savior's spouse  
God has chosen you by love.**

**C:** Glory to the Father, Son  
And the Holy Spirit  
From all ages to ages  
Now and forever, Amen.

Or

### **Psalms 45 & 128**

**C:** Listen, my daughter, and understand;  
pay me careful heed.  
Forget your people and your father's house.

(*Qanona*) O Church, bride of our Savior, you rejoice!  
Eternal God, out of His love has chosen you as His bride.

**A:** **All the beauty of the King's daughter is within her;  
Her raiment is covered in gold.**

**C:** She will visit the king with pricey gifts;  
The virgin maids will accompany her.

- A:** They will enter the palace filled with gladness;  
All generations will recount his name.
- C:** In your house, your wife will be like a vine ready to be harvested;  
Your children will be like the cedar sprouts around the table.
- A:** All those who fear the Lord will be blessed like this;  
May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life.
- C:** Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- A:** From eternity and forever, Amen.
- C:** (*Qanona*) O Church, bride of our Savior, you rejoice!  
Eternal God, out of His love, has chosen you as His bride.
- D:** Amen. Peace be with us.
- C:** O Lord our God, for all the help and grace You have given us and for which we can never thank you enough, we praise and glorify You unceasingly in Your Church who is crowned like a bride and filled with all goodness and grace. For You are God the creator and the Lord of all, forever.
- A:** Amen.
- C:** May M'shiha who said, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness," be the beacon for you.

The celebrant lights the candle or the lamp

**(Hymn)**

- A:** Lord of all we bow and praise You  
Jesus Christ, we glorify You  
For You give us glorious resurrection  
And You are the one who saves our souls.

Or

A: Lord of all, we praise You.  
Jesus Christ, we glorify You;  
For You are the one who raises our bodies  
And saves our souls.

D: Let us pray. Peace be with us.

C: My Lord, You are truly the One who raises our bodies. You are the Savior of our souls, and the preserver of our lives. We are bound always to thank, adore, and glorify You. The Lord of all, forever.

A: Amen.

*(Hymn)*

D: Lift up your voices and sing aloud  
Let us all sing His praise  
Bless the Lord  
Bless the Lord eternal.

A: Holy Lord of all  
Holy Mighty One  
Holy Immortal One  
Have mercy on us.

*Or*

D: Brothers and Sisters, raise your voices and glorify the living God.

A: Holy Lord, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One,  
Have mercy on us.

S: Let us pray. Peace be with us.

C: Glorious, mighty, immortal and holy God who dwells in the holy ones and in whom You are well-pleased, we beseech You to look upon us. O my Lord, pardon us and have mercy on us, as You are accustomed to, at all times. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Lord of all, forever.

A: Amen.

The first reader carrying the Old Testament lectionary goes to the right lectern and says:

- D: Brothers and sisters, please be seated and listen attentively.  
A reading from the Book of Genesis.

Genesis 1:26-28

Or

Genesis 2:18-24

Turning to the celebrant, the reader bows for blessing:

Bless me, my Lord.

The Celebrant blesses the reader saying:

- C: May God ✠ bless you.

Or

- C: May the Lord, who enlightens us through His teachings, be glorified. May His grace always be upon you ✠ and your listeners.

The reader facing the people reads the text and when the reading is complete, the second reader goes to the same place and says:

- D: Listen and be attentive:

- D: A reading from the book of ...

Isaiah 61:10-11

Or

Proverbs 31:10-31

Or

Ecclesiasticus 26:1-4, 13-17

Then turning to the celebrant:

Bless me, my Lord.

The celebrant blesses him and says:

- C: May God ✠ bless you.

Or

**C:** May the Lord, who enlightens us through His teachings, be glorified. May His grace always be upon you ✠ and your listeners.

*Then the lector reads the text.*

*At the end of the reading:*

**A:** Praise be to the Lord, our God.

**C:** O Lord our God, help us with Your grace and mercy. Illumine our minds to listen and understand the sweet sound of Your life-giving and divine commandments. Through it, may love, hope, and salvation that are beneficial to our body and soul, bear fruit in us and may we constantly praise You. The Lord of all, forever.

**A:** Amen.

*The reader goes to the left lectern and says:*

**D:** Brothers and sisters, a reading from the first letter of St. Peter 3:1-7 (Pt 3:1-7).

*Turning to the celebrant and inclining head to him:*

Bless me, my Lord.

**C:** May Christ ✠ bless you.

*At the end of the reading:*

**A:** Praise be to Christ, Our Lord.

**D:** Halleluiah (3)

**(Hymn)**

*(Suvishesha velicchaththal...)*

By the light of the Good News  
He removed all darkness  
Fold your hands and worship Him  
The one who incarnated.

O Lord, in all this earth  
 To become Your true witness  
 May Your gospel be in us  
 And shine its rays of grace.

The celebrant recites in low voice:

- C: Lord Jesus Christ, the splendor of the glory of the Father, and the image of the One who begot you, You revealed Yourself to us in human body and illumined our minds with the light of Your Gospel. We offer You worship, glory, and thanksgiving. The Lord of all, forever. Amen.

The celebrant accompanied by the altar servers who carry the candles, thurifier and cross goes to the altar and takes the Gospel lectionary saying:

- C: Jesus Christ, the light of the world and the life of all! Glory be to the infinite mercy that sent You to us. Forever, Amen.

When the procession reaches the bema, the deacon says:

- D: Let us stand and listen attentively to the Holy Gospel.

The celebrant blesses the people with the Gospel lectionary and says:

- C: Peace ✠ be with you.

- A: With you and with your Spirit.

- C: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, proclaimed by St. Mark (Mk 10: 2-9).

- A: Glory to You Christ, Our Lord.

At the end of the Gospel reading:

- A: Glory to You Christ, Our Lord.

## Homily

The deacon begins the karozutha.

- D: With joy and devotion, let us pray, for this bride and groom who are going to be united through Matrimony, God have mercy on them.



- A: God, have mercy on them.
- D: Bless this bride and groom, to live a life of sacrifice in mutual love and harmony, we pray.
- A: God, have mercy on them.
- D: Bless this bride and groom, to live a marital life according to Your precepts, we pray.
- A: God, have mercy on them.
- D: Bless this couple, to live a happy married life with chastity and fidelity, we pray.
- A: God, have mercy on them.
- D: Bless this bride and groom, to live a life of prayer, trusting in Your help and experiencing Your graceful presence, we pray.
- A: God, have mercy on them.
- D: Bless them to calmly face sufferings, sorrows and troubles, we pray
- A: God, have mercy on them.
- D: Bless them to lead a life of self-giving sacrifice, we pray
- A: God, have mercy on them.
- D: Give them the grace to raise the children that you give them in favour before people and God, we pray.
- A: God, have mercy on them.
- C: Lord God, bless this bride and groom to lead their family with joy and hope. Fill them with the spirit of unity and peace to be faithful partners in life. Be gracious to their parents and the dear ones who raised this couple in Your love. The Lord of all, forever.
- A: Amen.

## The Nuptial Covenant

C: (Name of the bridegroom), trusting in the providence of God the loving Father and in compliance with the law of the Church, with free will and full consent, do you take (name of the bride) as your wife?

**Groom: Yes, I do.**

C: (Name of the bride), trusting in the providence of God the loving Father and in compliance with the law of the Church, with free will and full consent, do you take (name of the bridegroom) as your husband?

**Bride: Yes, I do.**

C: (To the witnesses)  
And you are witnesses to this?

**Witnesses: Yes, we are.**

C: (To the couple)  
As a sign of this covenant, you may now join your right hands.

C: May God Almighty be with you. May He bind you in holy matrimony to live a family life with love and unity of mind (blesses the couple and sprinkles Holy Water on the hands joined). The Lord of all, forever.

A: Amen.

## Blessing of the Thāli

C: O God, loving Father, bless ✕ this thāli, the symbol of oneness, that unites the bride and groom in mutual trust and love. May they be strengthened to cheerfully bear the difficulties of life, and to lead a holy life according to Your will. May this thāli be also a sign of fidelity (sprinkles Holy Water upon the thāli).

A: Amen.

## Blessing of the Rings

**C:** O merciful God, bless ✠ these rings the bride and the groom exchange as a symbol of their love and fidelity. The Lord of all forever (*sprinkles Holy Water*).

**A:** Amen.

## Blessing of the Manthrakodi

**C:** O merciful Lord, who adorns the human soul with the enduring mantle of grace, bless ✠ this manthrakodi. Help this bride and groom to put on the robe of glory through a life of mutual love and complete self-giving (*sprinkles Holy water*).

**A:** Amen.

The celebrant gives the thāli in the hands of the groom who ties it around the bride's neck. If rings are there the bride and groom exchange them on each other's fingers. (Garlanding may be done at this time). The celebrant gives the manthrakodi to the groom who either spreads it on the bride's head, or hands in the same to the bride. As the groom ties the Thāli or gives the same in the hands of the bride. The choir sings the following hymn.

### (Hymn)

(*Aanandikkuka priyaputhree ...*)

The hearts are now rejoicing  
You are now one in the body  
The vines Father God has raised  
In the garden that is of love.

Till this day you were just strangers  
But today the Lord joined you  
So in the bond of pure holy love  
You are joined as one body.

You will receive the children He gives  
As His gift with open arms  
With joy they will sing praise to God  
In days of sorrow and joy.

## The Matrimonial Pledge

The newlyweds joining their hands repeat after the celebrant:

**Bride & Bridegroom:** We pledge to live in love and fidelity / and with oneness of mind / in joy and sorrow / in wealth and want / in health and sickness / from this day / till the hour of our death. / May the Almighty God / help us live / in accordance with this promise.

**D:** Brothers and Sisters, bow your heads and receive the blessing.

The newlyweds bow down and receive the blessing

**C:** (Raising his right hand over the heads of the couple) With His right hand of mercy, may the Almighty God bless you. May He protect you under the wings of His providence. May God who inseparably united you be your help in all your endeavours. May He grant you the wellbeing of your mind and body. May God help you to gladly receive the children He may deign to bless you with and to lead them in the path of holiness. And may He make you worthy to offer Him praise, worship, and thanksgiving.

**A:** Amen.

## Final Blessing

**C:** Blessed be God, the Merciful One, who in His immense love, created humankind as male and female, and made them participate in the work of creation. May He keep you in pure love and selfless sacrifice. May God bless your family with the gift of children. May He make your life prosperous and fulfill your desires and dreams. May He grant you many sincere friends to help you in times of need. May He make you worthy to offer Him praise, honour, and thanksgiving in heaven. May God bless you, the new couple, and all who are present in this sacred service. Now ✠, always, (blesses all) and forever.

**A:** Amen.