

Incense is used in the ceremony as well as in worship in the Orthodox Church, as instructed by God in the Bible (Exodus 40:27, Leviticus 16:12, Malachi 1:11, Revelation 8:3).

The ceremony also includes readings from St. Paul to the Ephesians 5:22-32 and from the Gospel according to Mathew 19:1-6. Both set the foundations for the Christian marriage and the relationship between husband and wife.



When the Bible describes the faithful in heaven, it mentions that they are dressed in special robes. To attract our hearts to heaven, the church puts on the bride and groom special blessed robes. In doing so, the church brings them good news of great joy that they are heirs of heaven.

In the Bible, anointing with blessed oil was a source of spiritual power. For example, the apostles “anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them” (Mark 6:13). In the ceremony, the priest prays on oil, asking God, “Bless this oil so that it may sanctify your two servants ... It becomes an anointment of righteousness, justice, purity, light, joy, victory over devil.” He then anoints the newly married couple.

Later on, the priest presents the bride to the groom while the deacons sing “Take unto you o groom, your bride. Jesus Christ has given her to you.” Then the doors of the sanctuary are opened and the newly married couple kneels down before the altar—a sign of submission to God—to listen to the last prayer and to know that they have received each other from God and before His holy altar.

Coptic Orthodox Crowning Ceremony

By Victor Beshir





The Crowning Ceremony

The marriage ceremony is a holy event in the life of the bride and groom since a unity between them is created by God during the ceremony. He waters the love relationship between the two with His boundless love, peace, joy, and a cluster of blessings. The ceremony has a deep spirituality that goes back to early Christian centuries.

As the Bible considers inheritance of heaven the ultimate goal of human life, the church-using symbols and metaphors-shows the bride and groom's heavenly rewards in store for them, one of which is crowning.

The church crowns the bride and groom with prayed-on crowns, a joyful reminder of their inheritance of heaven, as the Bible promises

“And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away” (1 Peter 5:4). This is why the marriage ceremony is called the “Crowning Ceremony.” Ultimately, it takes a book to record and explain the rituals of the ceremony, but I will mention here the highlights of the ceremony. The ceremony starts with a procession of both the bride and groom into the church, lead by deacons singing a joyful hymn “King of Peace...Emanuel our God is now in our midst, in the glory of His Father and the Holy Spirit,” thus celebrating God's presence.



The Procession

The priest then takes the wedding rings and ties them with a scarlet ribbon, a reminder of our salvation by the blood of Christ. This is followed by signing them three times with the sign of the cross announcing the marriage of the groom and the bride in the name of the Holy Trinity. Hence, the marriage is completed not by the power of man but by God.

Many prayers and hymns are sung in joyful tunes, supplicating God for inner-peace, heavenly joy, union, prosperity, protection, wisdom, and many other blessings for the bride and groom.

