

**BLESSING OF PERSONS MARRIED ACCORDING TO THE MARRIAGE ACT
REGULATIONS 2019**

The Synod of the Diocese of Wangaratta makes the following Regulations pursuant to Section 5(2) of the *Canon Concerning Services* 1992.

Short Title

1. These Regulations may be cited as the **Blessing of Persons Married According to the Marriage Act 1961 Regulations 2019**.

Commencement

2. These Regulations come into operation on 1 September 2019.
3. In these Regulations **minister** has the same meaning as in *A Prayer Book for Australia*.

Form of Service

4. Where a minister is asked to and agrees to conduct a Service of Blessing for persons married according to the *Marriage Act* 1961 the minister will use the form of service at Appendix A to these Regulations and no other form of service.

Conscientious Objection

5. No minister will be compelled to assent to conducting such a service if to do so would offend their conscience.
6. Where a minister has a conscientious objection to conducting such a service, that minister may refer the couple seeking such a blessing to a minister who is willing and able to conduct the service.

Reporting

7. Each Parish shall report to the Bishop at the end of each Financial year details of such blessings as have been conducted pursuant to section 4 or referred pursuant to section 6.

Appendix A



A Service of Blessing for persons who have been married according to the Marriage Act 1961

INTRODUCTION

The Priest addresses the couple and congregation

The Lord be with you
And also with you

We have come together to ask God's blessing on **N** and **N** as they continue their married life together.

Hear what the Epistle of St John says: "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God", and, "No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us."

- 1 John 4.7 & 12.

For the love that we receive and give let us thank God, saying together

Almighty God, source of all being, we thank you for your love, which creates and sustains us. We thank you for the physical and emotional expression of that love; and for the blessings of companionship and friendship. We pray that we may use your gifts so that we can ever grow into a deeper understanding of love and of your purpose for us, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Let us pray.

Loving and gracious God, who made us in your image and sent your son Jesus Christ to welcome us home; protect us in love and empower us for service. Through the power of the Holy Spirit may **N** and **N** become living signs of God's love and may we uphold them in the promises that each affirms this day, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Ministry of the Word

One or more readings from the Scriptures, appropriate to the occasion, shall then be read.

A homily or address may follow the readings.

THE PROMISES

As you have entered into a civil marriage and now seek God's blessing on your ongoing life together, I ask you:

Will you be to each other a companion in joy and a comfort in times of trouble, and will you provide for each other the opportunity for love to deepen?

*Couple: **We will, with God's help.***

*(to each partner in turn): Will you, **N**, continue to give yourself to **N**, sharing your love and your life, your wholeness and your brokenness, your failure and your success?*

*Partner: **I will.***

PRAYERS

These might include the following or something similar.

Loving God, whose son Jesus Christ welcomed strangers and called them his friends, grant to **N** and **N** such gifts of grace that they may be bearers of your friendship and their home a place of welcome for all. **Amen**

Jesus, our brother, inspire **N** and **N** in their lives together, that they may come to live for one another and serve each other in true humility and kindness. Through their lives may they welcome each other in times of need and in their hearts may they celebrate together in their times of joy, for your name's sake. **Amen**

Holy Spirit of God, guard and defend **N** and **N** in their life together, protect them from evil, strengthen them in adversity until you bring them to the joy of your heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour Christ has taught us we are confident to pray:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.
The Blessing**

Let us now pray that **N** and **N** may be sustained by God's love.

Spirit of God, you teach us through the example of Jesus that love is the fulfilment of the Law, help **N** and **N** to persevere in love, to grow in mutual understanding, and to deepen their trust in each other; that in wisdom, patience and courage, their life together may be a source of grace to all with whom they share it; and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon you to guide and protect you and all those you love, today and always. **Amen.**

This Service of Blessing is best placed in the context of liturgical worship.

This service may be followed by the celebration of Holy Communion, APBA second order, with adaptations permissible according to the Rubrics.

Music may be interposed as the occasion demands.