

THE MYSTERY OF CROWNING (Marriage)

The holy Apostle, Paul, called Christian marriage a “great mystery.” By the word “mystery.” St. Paul was referring to marriage as something divine in origin and in purpose. After telling us that marriage is a “great mystery,” he goes on to say: “I speak concerning Christ and the church.” Marriage is a holy mystery; one of the seven Holy Mysteries. It is a sign of the union between Christ, the Bridegroom, and His Bride, the Church. Christ said: “Have you not read that, He who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife: and the two shall be one flesh?’ Therefore, they are no more two, but one flesh. What, therefore, God has joined together, let not man put asunder.” *Matthew 19:4-6*. A Christian husband and wife are called to be living icons of the union of love between Christ and His Church. In the Byzantine wedding ritual, crowns are set upon the heads of the man and woman to show that they are blessed with “glory and honor” (*Ps. 8:5*), and are called to participate in God’s work of creation and in renewal of creation.