

A Celebration of Marriage

Ceremony Opening

(*To All:*) We are gathered here [in the presence of God], [and family and friends], not to witness the beginning of what will be, but rather what already is! We do not create this marriage, because we cannot. We can and do, however, celebrate with [*Bride*] and [*Groom*] the wondrous and joyful occurrence that has already taken place in their lives.

(*To [Bride] and [Groom]:*) True marriage is more than joining the bonds of marriage of two persons; it is the union of two hearts. It lives on the love you give each other and never grows old, but thrives on the joy of each new day. Marriage is love. May you always be able to talk things over, to confide in each other, to laugh with each other, to enjoy life together, and to share moments of quiet and peace, when the day is done. May you be blessed with a lifetime of happiness and a home of warmth and understanding.

Take a moment to forget all the stress of planning this day and simply enjoy your friends and family who gathered to spend this day with you. This group of loved ones will, likely, never be together in the same place again. Take a moment now to think about how each person has touched your life and why they are here with you today.

[Also, remember all those not with you in body, but do not be sorrowful; for you know all those who love you and ever have loved you are here with you in spirit.]

Will the two of you please join hands?

No other human ties are more tender and no other vows more important than those you are about to take. Both of you come to this day with the deep realization that the contract of marriage is sacred as are all of its obligations and responsibilities.

Celebration of Marriage

(*To [Bride] and [Groom]:*) Treat yourselves and each other with respect, and remind yourselves often of what brought you together. Take responsibility for making the other feel safe, and give the highest priority to the tenderness, gentleness and kindness that your connection deserves. When frustration, difficulty and fear assail your relationship, as they threaten all relationships at some time or another, remember to focus on what is right between you, not only the part that seems wrong. In this way, you can survive the times when clouds drift across the face of the sun in your lives, remembering that, just because you may lose sight of it for a moment, does not mean the sun has gone away. And, if each of you takes responsibility for the quality of your life together, it will be marked by abundance and delight.

May you always need one another, not to fill an emptiness, but to help each other know your fullness. May you want one another, but not out of lack. May you embrace one

another, but not encircle one another. May you succeed in all-important ways with each other, and not fail in the little graces. May you have happiness, and may you find it in making one another happy. May you have love, and may you find it in loving one another.

The Presentation (*Woman first*)

Do you [*Name*] take this [woman/man] to be your lawful wedded spouse, to have and to hold, to love and to cherish, to be true to [her/him], through times of sorrow as well as joy? Do you promise this heart, body, and mind? Do you commit to honor this vow all the days of your life?

Who presents these people to be married to each other?

Will all of you witnessing these promises do all in your power to uphold this couple in their marriage?

[A Scripture lesson may be included here.]

[Blessing of the rings

Bless, O Lord, these rings that they may be the outward and visible signs of the vows made this day, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.]

The Vows

Vows I (*Man to Woman first*)

I, [Name],
promise you, [Name],
that I will be your [wife/husband] from this day forward,
to be faithful and honest in every way,
to honor the faith and trust you place in me,
to love and respect you in your successes and in your failures,
to make you laugh and to be there when you cry,
to care for you in sickness and in health,
to softly kiss you when you are hurting,
and to be your companion and your friend,
on this journey that we make together.

[And I give you this rings as a sign of that promise.]

Vows II (traditional)

The Man, facing the woman and taking her right hand in his, says

I, N., take you N., to be my wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part. And I give you this ring as a sign of my solemn vow.

They loose their hands, and the Woman, still facing the man, takes his right hand in hers, and says,

I, N., take you N., to be my husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part. And I give you this ring as a sign of my solemn vow.

Vows III

(*To [Bride] and [Groom]:*) [*Bride*] and [*Groom*], look at one another — remember this moment in time. Before this moment you have been many things to one another — acquaintance, friend, companion, and lover. Now you shall say a few words that take you across a threshold of life, and things will never be quite the same between you. For after these vows you shall say to the world, “This is my husband. This is my wife.”

(*[Groom]:*) [*Bride*], today I take you to be no other than who you are, the woman I fell in love with, and now you give me the honor of being able to call you my wife. For that honor I promise to always be there to love you and make you smile, or to comfort and protect you. And I promise, that no matter what lies in our path it will be our path, and I will stay the man you fell in love with. I give you this ring as a token that I shall love you, in all times, in all places, and in all ways, forever.

(*[Bride]:*) [*Groom*], today I choose to make a deeper commitment to you. It is my way of telling you that our experiences together have been so good that I want them to continue for the rest of my life. I loved you before the ceremony and I love you more because of it. You are everything I ever hoped to find in a partner. I want to spend the rest of my life with you. I give you this ring as a token that I shall love you, in all times, in all places, and in all ways, forever.

Proclamation of the Rings

(*To [Bride] and [Groom]:*) Wedding rings are made precious by our wearing them. Your rings say that even in your uniqueness you have chosen to be bound together. Let these rings also be a sign that love has substance as well as soul, a present as well as a past, and that, despite its occasional sorrows, love is a circle of happiness, wonder, and delight. May these rings remind you always of the vows you have taken here today.

[The Binding

Those whom God has joined together, let no one put asunder.]

Closing

(*To All:*) We rejoice this day in the marriage of [*Bride*] and [*Groom*]. We celebrate the love that brought them to this day. With love that deepens through many years, may they know its meaning and its mystery — how we become truly one in sharing ourselves and one another, and yet, remain truly two in our own uniqueness. (*To [Bride] and [Groom]:*)

May your house be a place of happiness for all who enter it, and a place where the old and the young are renewed in each others' company, a place for growing, a place for music, a place for laughter. And when shadows and darkness fall within its rooms, may it still be a place of hope and strength for all who enter it, especially for those who may be entrusted to your care. May no person be alien to your compassion. May your larger family be the family of all humankind. And may those who are nearest to you and dearest to you constantly be enriched by the beauty and the bounty of your love for each other.

(To [Bride] and [Groom]:) *[Bride]* and *[Groom]*, from this day forward your lives shall be woven of one design, and your perils and your joys shall not be known apart. As you increase in love and understanding, may your joys stand victoriously against the storm of circumstance that beats impartially on all our doors. From the rich encouragement of your affection, may you be inspired to open your doors to the needs you perceive in the world. In the embrace of mutual respect, may you each complete the unfinished pattern of your true selves. Let the passing of the days and the years deepen the love of your union and make it full of tenderness and grace.

[God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep you; the Lord mercifully with his favor look upon you, and fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace; that you may faithfully live together in this life, and in the age to come have life everlasting. Amen.]

Pronouncement

May you strive all the rest of your lives to meet this commitment to each other with the same love and devotion that you now possess. Now since you have publicly promised your commitment to each other for all time, I call upon all gathered here to witness that you are now husband and wife. You may now seal this ceremony with a kiss.

It is now my honour and pleasure to present to you Mr & Mrs N._____ N._____.