

CEREMONY OF MARRIAGE

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GREETINGS

_____ and _____, I extend to you greetings and affirmation on this momentous day of love and confirmation. To our assembled guests, on behalf of _____ and _____, I extend to all of you a very warm welcome.

_____, and _____, on behalf of those assembled here, we acknowledge and

honor you at this most special and sacred sequence of your lives.

We welcome you to this moment in your lives and to the place you have come to in each other's hearts. We join with you on this day, as you commit before God and humanity that from this point forward you shall live as one.

I remind all of your guests that they have been invited here for a holy purpose, not just to witness, but to participate fully with your thoughts and prayers, asking God to bless this couple and their married life. As special guests, you are here because this couple feels close to you and asks that you join with them in this dedication of sacred purpose. You represent symbolically all the people in the world who will be touched in any way by the life of this couple. You represent their friends and family, now and forever. They have chosen this act of marriage and this public, holy ceremony in which to proclaim it. Together we all thank God who brought them together and ask God always to guide their way.

MESSAGE ON MARRIAGE (To the couple)

_____ and _____, we live at a time when very little in life is considered sacred. One thing must remain so, however, or all the world disintegrates. That is and shall be an agreement (covenant) between two people. This day we celebrate a sacred agreement between the two of you.

I congratulate you on the journey of your lives, on the strength and the courage it has taken for each of you to make your way to this time and place. Both of you have found a way to put away childish things and embrace a very mature love. You receive on this day the blessing thereof, for yourselves and all the world.

We live in times that are constant with challenges. This marriage is not to be an escape from the world, but indeed it is to be a commitment to greater service to the world. You shall not exclude the world but include it in your love. Together, in this marriage, you shall contribute more fully, for you shall both be more complete.

_____ (her name),
_____ (his name), is God's gift to you, but he is not a gift for you alone. It is God's will that

in your love, this man might find within himself a greater sense of who he is meant to be. You are asked by God to see the good in this man, to accept him for who he is and who he shall be, that thus he might be healed and made strong. In this way, God's purpose shall be accomplished in this relationship. May this man find a glimpse of the kingdom of heaven through the love that you will share.

And so it is with you also,
_____ (his name), that although
_____ (her name) is God's gift to you, she is not a gift intended for you alone. You are asked by God to so love this woman, that in your love she might find herself as God has created her, so beautiful and strong and brave and true, that the entire world might be blessed by the presence of a woman who so shines. May she relax in your arms as she has never relaxed before. May she know, from now on, that there is one on whose love she can depend forever.

Our prayer for both of you is that you might find in each other's love such profound acceptance and total release, that together you might experience

the forgiveness that shall free the world. May you create, with God, a piece of heaven on earth. Into a darkened world the Lord has sent your love for one another, and accomplishes between you the miracle that will heal us all.

From this point forward,
_____ (her name),
_____’s (his name) needs will carry the same priority as your own. Likewise,
_____ (his name), from this point forward, _____’s (her name) needs will be seen to be as important as your own. You shall not be as two conflicting or competing forces, but rather the energies of your lives shall blend into harmony and oneness through the grace of God. The angels shall dance between you, and they will rejoice in the dance of life you do together.

To both of you, I enjoin you to release at this time all impediments to your joy. In this moment may you forgive each other any past transgressions, that you might enter this marriage reborn. Allow the waters of forgiveness to wash you clean. You are given the chance to begin your lives again this day, as

God grants you radical renewal through the power of this commitment. You commit to a compelling future for yourselves, for any children you have or might one day have, and to any part you might play in the healing of the world. Receive fully God’s gifts on this day, as God receives so fully the gift of your love for each other. May you rejoice in the Lord, as the Lord rejoices in you.

ADDRESS TO PARENTS (To the parents)

To the parents of _____ and _____, congratulations on the part you have played in raising a daughter and son of such serious purpose.

They accept a very mature and meaningful task in taking on this marriage. On their behalf, and on behalf of all those here, I thank you. I remind you that it is more than their lives that are joined here, it is yours as well. With this marriage, God joins your two families, and it is the family bond that shall rebuild the world.

With this in mind, I ask you

_____ (her parents), to take this man, _____, as your son. Will you accept him into your family to take him into your hearts, as a son and beloved to _____ (her name)? We will.

And of you, _____ (his parents), I ask the same, will you take this woman, _____, into your hearts, that she might live from this day as your daughter and beloved to _____ (his name)? We will.

May the miracle of this marriage extend throughout your families. As of this ceremony, may all your energies support these two, that any words you say might bless and protect the holiness of this union.

READING

Jesus' first words to Simon were "Come, follow me," When Jesus entered Simon's life, this plain fisherman became a new person. He did not become a perfect person, however, and he never stopped being Simon. But he did become Peter when

he answered Jesus' call. Peter, a new man with new goals and new priorities. He became the "rock" in which Jesus would build the church.

We may wonder what Jesus saw in Simon, or what he sees in us when he calls us to follow him. The Bible says, "God sees that which is not, as if it already were." So Jesus with his "eyes of man" physically sees Simon but with his "eyes of God" he spiritually sees and responds to Peter. Peter is Simon's God – created identity. Peter is Simon's calling. That is what Jesus saw in Simon – His God created identity – and that is how Jesus sees us. The fifth chapter of Matthew calls us to "Live out your God created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives towards you."

So how can we answer that call, here, today. First, in a way, we already have by choosing to be here and witness _____ and _____ wedding. But I beg you to press in further, past just witnessing the ceremony and reception, but to be a witness of a marriage – until death do they part. It means accepting, honoring and encouraging

_____ and
_____ call to be together in union with God, for a long time. It means living generously and graciously towards them with our thoughts, our words and our prayers, seeing them not with our own eyes, but pressing on to see them through the eyes of God as a new creation in God's union. Let us be a good witness – the kind we would want in our lives.

It is said that many are called but few follow. So, I call to you today as a fellow witness to this marriage and in Jesus' name, "Come, follow me."

THE CHARGE AND PREPARATION TO VOWS

_____ and _____, I charge you with the creative challenge to keep alive the wonder of marriage. May you have the capacity to grow and to change together. May you maintain spontaneity, flexibility and humor. I challenge you to give fully, to show your real feelings, to save time for each other, no matter what demands are made upon your day. I encourage you to see the meaning of life through the prism of your love; to nurture each to fullness and wholeness, and in learning to love each other more

deeply, learn to also love the creation in which the mystery of your love has happened.

VOWS OF MARRIAGE AND EXCHANGE OF RINGS

And so now we come, _____ and _____, to the exchange of vows and the exchange of rings which symbolize and bind your love to each other.

(Groom to Bride).

With this ring, I give you my promise that from this day forward you shall not walk alone. May my heart be your shelter and my arms be your home. May God bless you always. May we walk together through all things. May you feel deeply loved, for indeed you are. May you always see your innocence in my eyes. With this ring, I give you my heart. I have no greater gift to give. I promise I shall do my best. I shall always try.

I feel so honored to call you wife. I feel so blessed to call you mine. May we feel this joy forever. I thank God. I thank you. Amen.

(Bride to Groom).

With this ring, I give to you my promise that from this day forward you shall not walk alone. May my heart be your shelter and my arms be your home. May God bless you always. May we walk together through all things. May you feel deeply loved, for indeed you are. May you always see your innocence in my eyes. With this ring, I give you my heart. I have no greater gift to give. I promise I shall do my best. I shall always try. I feel so honored to call you husband. I feel so blessed to call you mine. May we feel this joy forever. I thank God. I thank you. Amen.

PRAYER

(At this most special and sacred moment of all times, let us do that which is most special and sacred to us all. Let us pray).

Dear God,
Please bless this couple. May their love be nurtured by You, always and forever. May this marriage be held in Your hands and ministered unto you by Your angels. We dedicate this love to You. May it serve Your purposes; may it increase Your dominion. May this man grow strong in the arms of this woman.

May this woman grow glorious in the love of this man. May the earth be brought closer to heaven through this love. May all the world be blessed hereby. Thank you very much, dear Lord. Amen.

READING ON LOVE

Love will enter immediately into any mind that truly wants it, but it must want it truly. Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all of the barriers within yourself that you have built against it. Love waits on welcome, not on time. When you want only love you will see nothing else.

If love is sharing, how can you find it except through itself? Offer it and it will come to you, because it is drawn to itself. But offer attack and love will remain hidden, for it can live only in peace. With love in you, you have no need except to extend it.

You will not be able to give love welcome separately. You could no more know God alone than God knows you without your brother or sister. But together you could no more be unaware of love than

love could know you not, or fail to recognize itself in you. Grace is acceptance of the Love of God within a world of seeming hate and fear.

Gratitude goes hand in hand with love, and where one is the other must be found. Love without trust is impossible. Love would ask you to lay down all defenses as merely foolish.

No course whose purpose is to teach you to remember what you really are could fail to emphasize that there can never be a difference in what you really are and what love is. If you achieve the faintest glimmering of what love means today, you have advanced in distance without measure and in time beyond the count of years to your release. See the Love of God in you, and you will see it everywhere because it is everywhere.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

_____ and _____, I remind you that the God who brought you together and nurtured this relationship is the key to your success as a married couple. May you allow into your marriage the

presence of a mystical third, who shall guide your thinking and bless your home. Call on God's Spirit consistently and often. We bring to mind as well the lives of any children who might one day gather unto you, and in the spirit of this day, we bless them also. May this marriage be your sanctuary, your place of peace.

QUESTION OF COMMITMENT

(To the Groom)

_____, do you take this woman, _____, to be your lawful and spiritually wedded wife, to love her and cherish her, honor and sustain her, through times of darkness as well as light, henceforth and forevermore? Do you promise that times of trouble will not deter you, or tempt you to forsake this love? Do you commit before God to honor this vow unto all your days?

(Groom) I do.

(Question to the Bride)

_____, do you take this man, _____, to be your lawful and spiritually

wedded husband, to love him and cherish him, honor and sustain him, through times of darkness as well as light, henceforth and forevermore? Do you promise that times of trouble will not deter you, or tempt you to forsake this love? Do you commit before God to honor this vow unto all your days?

(Bride) I do.

PROCLAMATION

And so, _____ and _____,
by the authority vested in me by the church of God
and the state of _____, but much
more important, by the fact that I believe in the
power of your own love and agreement this day, the
look of love in your eyes, and the seriousness with
which you make this commitment; and because I
believe my faith is shared by others gathered here, it is
my honor and my delight to now pronounce you
husband and wife, now and forever more. Amen.

(Exchange of Affection)

BENEDICTION

ANNOUNCEMENT

It gives me great pleasure to be the first to announce
_____ and _____
as husband and wife.