

Wedding Ceremony
from Rev. Mary Keller

Greeting and Opening Prayer

This is a very special day and a very special event in the lives of

_____ and _____

SO LET US BEGIN WITH PRAYER:

Father God, we invoke your blessing upon this ceremony and upon the lives of
_____ and _____ who are about to be joined in marriage.

We ask you to bless this sacred relationship with your love and wisdom. We feel your loving Presence with us and within us.

Thank you, Father, for the blessing that you have imparted to this relationship and for your continuing blessings, which we know are already coming forth. Amen.

Optional: May I ask, at this time, who gives this woman to this man in marriage?

The Commitment of Marriage

Remarks to Guests

My friends, we are here today to witness and to celebrate the drawing together of two separate lives. Today this man _____ and this woman _____ are to be joined in marriage. Marriage is not to be entered into lightly, but with a deep certainty, with mutual respect, and with a sense of reverence which at the same time includes humor and a feeling of positive expectancy.

Today's celebration of human affection is the outward sign of a sacred and inward commitment which religious societies may consecrate and states may legalize, but which neither can create. Only you can marry yourselves. Furthermore, you will, in a sense remarry each other every day of your lives by a mutual commitment to love each other, to work towards creating an atmosphere of care and consideration and respect for one another.

Marriage symbolizes the intimate sharing of two lives, yet this sharing must not diminish, but enhance the individuality of each partner. We must give ourselves away. A good, balanced relationship is one in which neither partner is overpowered or absorbed by the other. It's out of the tension between separateness and union that love, whose incredible strength is equaled only by its incredible fragility, is born and reborn.

Remarks to Couple

On this day of your marriage, you two stand somewhat apart from all other human beings. You stand within the charmed circle of your love; and this is as it should be. Real love is not total absorption in each other; it is looking outward in the same direction – together. It's having compatible goals and ideals. Love makes burdens lighter, because you divide them. It makes joys more intense because you share them. It makes you stronger, so you can reach out towards those goals and ideals and become involved with life in ways you dared not risk alone. It enables you, trusting each other, to trust life and not be afraid. Love permits you not only to accept and give affection to one another, but together, to have affections and consideration for others.

This love of which I speak is slow to lose patience . . . it looks for a way of being constructive. It is not possessive; it is neither anxious to impose nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance.

From this day onward you must come closer together than ever before, but at the same time, your love should give you the strength to stand apart, to seek out unique destinies to make your special contributions to the world which is always a part of us but ever more than us.

Poem

In the words of Kahlil Gibran:

Love one another, but make not a bond of love;
Let it rather be a moving sea between the shore of your souls;
Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup;
Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf;
Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each other of you be alone.
Even as the strings of a harp are alone though they quiver with the same music;
Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping –
For only the hand of life can contain your hearts.
And stand together, yet not too near together,
For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadows.

Remarks to Couple

Today, as you join yourselves in marriage, there is a vast and unknown future stretching out before you. The possibilities and potentials of your married life are great and now falls on your shoulders the task of choosing values and making real the moral and spiritual dreams that lie deep within the depths of your souls. And as these dreams take form as reality you will create the meaning of your life together.

_____ and _____, nothing is easier than saying words – and nothing is harder than living them day after day.

What you promise today must be renewed and rededicated tomorrow. At the end of this ceremony, you will be husband and wife but you must still decide, each day that stretches out before you, that you want to bring to one another your best efforts to love.

AND NOW, ARE YOU READY TO BE MARRIED?

THE COMMITMENT OF MARRIAGE

DEDICATION

_____ and _____: As you dedicate yourselves to each other, you become two souls expressing as one in faith and in love. Whatever it is you seek to accomplish together, know that God is at work in and through you both, guiding you to your highest good.

And now I'm asking you to join your hands and close your eyes. At this time silently and meaningfully consecrate and dedicate your lives to one another.

(After pause)

Vocal Rendition – Lord's Prayer

Father/God, we acknowledge your blessing upon this marriage, and we give thanks that your Spirit will be with _____ and _____ not only on this day, but in all the days to come.

BLESSINGS

LET US PRAY:

May your marriage bring you all the exquisite excitements a marriage should bring, and may your life grant you also patience, tolerance and understanding.

May you always need one another – not so to fill your emptiness as to help you know your fullness.

May you want one another, but not out of weakness.

May you entice each other, but not compel one another.

May you embrace each other, but not encircle one another.

May you see many things to praise, and often say “I love you.”

May you enter into the mystery which is the awareness of one another’s presence – no more physical than spiritual, warm and near when you are side by side, and warm and near when you are in separate rooms or distant places.

May you have happiness, and may you find it making one another happy.

May you have love, and may you find it loving one another.

EXCHANGE OF VOWS

WEDDING VOWS

_____. Repeat after me;

I, _____ do take you, _____ to be my wedded wife/ and I pledge that I will love/honor, and care for you /in tenderness and affection / through all the experiences of our lives.

And _____, repeat after me:

I, _____, do take you, _____ to be my wedded husband / and I pledge that I will love, honor, and care for you / in tenderness and affections / through all the experience of our lives.

RING VOWS

Do we have rings to symbolize this union?

Friends, the wedding ring is one of the oldest symbols that we have, representing the marriage state. Being in the form of a circle, it represents that endless and unbroken love of God that shall link you mind to mind, body to body, and estate to estate.

_____. Will you take this ring and, placing it upon the third finger of _____’s left hand, repeat after me:

_____, with this ring/ a symbol of my unending love and affection, / I marry you /and join my life with yours.

Is there another ring to symbolize this union:

_____, will you take this ring and placing it upon the third finger of _____ left hand, repeat after me, _____, with this ring / a symbol of my love and affection, / I marry you / and join my life with yours.

OPTIONAL PRAYER

LET US PRAY:

Almighty Father, we ask your blessings on these, Your beloved children. We know that you love does inspire them, gives them your blessings, and brings them health and prosperity. We affirm Thy power to guide them in all their ways.

We give thanks for sharing this day of new beginnings. Amen.

BENEDICTION

And now, let us all rise and together we will give them our special blessing, repeating after me:

_____ and _____

The light of God surrounds you;
The love of God enfolds you;
The power of God protects you;
The presence of God watches over you;
Wherever you are, God is,
And all will be well in your life together.

And so it is –
And so it shall be.

Amen.

PRONCEMENT

_____ and _____ by the love and dedication in your hearts and by the promises spoken to each other this day, you have accepted each other as husband and wife.

Under the authority of the law of our land and in the name of the Holy Spirit which performs every true marriage, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

I wish you would kiss the bride.

Ladies and gentlemen, may I present to you for the first time:

MR. AND MRS. _____.