

A Sample Ceremony

1. SONG (*Somewhere over Rainbow*)

2. PROCESSIONAL

3. THE WELCOME:

Good *afternoon*. We gather here today to witness and celebrate an act of deep love. *John and Mary*, in their devotion, respect, and love for each other wish to unite in the holy bond of marriage, and to dedicate themselves to each other's happiness and wellbeing as life mates and partners. On behalf of them, I welcome you all.

4. THE INVOCATION:

To the gathered Assembly and the couple, the priest says:

✠ ✠ ✠ In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen!**

5. THE FOUNDATION:

Mary and John, marriage is a supreme sharing, perhaps the greatest and most challenging adventure and the most intimate of human relationships. It is the joyful uniting of a man and a woman whose care, affection and understanding have flowered into a deep and abiding love. Those who take its sacred vows have their lives blended together into one, as the waters of two rivers are joined when they come together to form an even greater one.

A true spiritual marriage is an act of metamorphosis, a profound mystery of creation and rebirth, as two become one. It is not a giving up or loss of oneself, but rather a giving over of oneself to something greater, a transformation of self in which each one can say, "*I am no longer only an I but also we.*" It is a process in which each can be challenged to discover new possibilities in themselves and each other.

In such a marriage, the wedding ceremony is the gateway into this mystery. For the lives the two of you have lived up until this moment are, in some sense, now truly completed and over. Together you now live within the creation of something wholly new and transcendent, something which has never existed before your miraculous marriage - an expression that is at once public and private, precious, sacred, and truly unique to the

two of you. In this act, you open yourselves to a fuller experience and expression of the great, vast miracle of love.

Remember that no ceremony can create your marriage. Only you can do that through love, patience, dedication, and perseverance. You create it through talking, listening and trying to understand each other. You create your marriage through helping, supporting and believing in each other and learning to forgive, to respect and to appreciate your differences. You will learn to make the important things matter and to let go of the rest. What this ceremony can do is to witness and affirm the choice you have made by choosing a new life today as husband and wife.

6. THE HONORING AND THE BLESSING:

Mary and John wish to acknowledge their parents on this occasion. They offer their profound gratitude to their parents for all the love and care they showed in raising them. The unconditional gifts of love and support that you have continually offered have inspired them to become who they are today, and they thank you, from the bottom of their hearts, for guiding them to this celebration of love here today. Without you, this day would not be possible.

*** pause for hug to parents***

Mary and John also wish to honor those who could not be present here on this day but are close to us in heart. We are especially mindful of (*Mary's paternal grandparents, Pat and Jim, John's paternal grandparents and maternal grandparents*). Let us now pause and close our eyes to bring to mind these loved ones. Though they are absent physically, we invoke, through our thoughts and prayers, their loving presence.

And now, from our hearts, we ourselves contemplate all the blessings we would bestow upon *Mary and John* in their lives as a couple and a family – and in our sincere desire to bless, we in turn, are blessed as well.

(a silent pause)

Priest: **Blessed Be.**

7. THE VOWS:

Mary and John will exchange their rings and declare their vows as they begin their life together as one.

Priest: *John*, do you take *Mary*, to be your **wife**? Do you promise to be true to her in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love her and honor her all the days of your life?

Groom: **I do.**

Priest: *Mary*, do you take *John*, to be your **husband**? Do you promise to be true to him in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love him and honor him all the days of your life?

Bride: **I do.**

8. THE RING CEREMONY:

And so, we come *Mary and John* to the presentation of rings by which you symbolize and bind your love.

Rings are handed to the priest and he continues,

Traditionally, the passage to the status of “husband and wife” is marked by the exchange of rings. These rings are a symbol of the unbroken circle of love. Love freely given has no beginning and no end, no giver, and no receiver for each is the giver and each is the receiver. As often as either of you looks at this symbol, I hope that you will be reminded of the commitment to love each other which you have made today.

Join me as I ask for God’s blessing upon these rings,

“In the Presence of God, your families, and friends, seal your promises now with these rings; signs and tokens of the life you are about to enter together. Bless ❖ ❖ ❖ O’ Lord the giving of these rings that *Mary and John* who wear them may do so in abiding Peace, Love, and Good Will forever more.” *Amen.*

Priest: *John*, please place the ring on *Mary’s* left hand and repeat after me ...

Groom: *Mary*, I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and faithfulness to you.

Priest: *By the same token Mary*, you may place a ring on *John’s* finger and repeat after me ...

Bride: *John*, I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and faithfulness to you.

Priest: May you wear these rings as the enclosing bond of reverence and trust and fulfill the circle of love that now makes your lives one.

9. THE BLESSING:

Mary and John may God bless and keep you, may the sun of many days and years shine upon you, may the love you have for one another grow and hold you close.

May the good true light within you guide your way together. May your dreams come true and when they don't may new dreams arise.

And long, long years from now, may you look at one another and be able to say, 'Because of you I have become the person I longed to be'.

10. THE PRAYER AND PRONOUNCEMENT:

To the assembly and the couple, the Priest begins,

Let us Pray: Dear God, thank You for this joyous day. Thank You for Your Light that has entered *Mary and John's* life. Thank You for all the miracles and blessings. Please bless this union. Help them find the perfect place in this world for their love to flourish. Let the radiant light of their love shine on all those around them. May all their future creations be blessed. God, bless them with the inner gifts of trust, compassion, forgiveness, and truth that they may live and grow together in love and peace. *Amen.*

Mary and John, in the presence of God, your family and friends today, you have spoken the words and performed the rites which unite your lives. It is my greatest joy and privilege as a priest in Christ's one holy Catholic and Apostolic church and my legal right as a minister authorized to do by this Commonwealth to declare you husband and wife.

John, you may now kiss your bride.

11. THE BENEDICTION:

To the Assembly and the couple:

Priest: *Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing...*

May the Peace that passes all understanding be yours now and forevermore.

The priest says to the assembly,

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my highest honor and privilege to present to all of you for the very first time, *Mr. and Mrs. Smith!*

12. THE RECESSIONAL