

Love me Forever!



WEDDING GUIDE

A helpful guide to plan your ceremony!



Outline of Standard Wedding Ceremony

1. Song *(optional)*
2. Processional
3. The Giving *(optional)*
4. The Welcome *(optional)*
5. The Invocation
 - a. Invocation Prayer
6. A Prayer *(optional)*
7. The Foundation
8. The Readings *(optional)*
9. Parental Honoring *(optional)*
10. Silent Blessing *(optional)*
11. The Hands Ceremony *(optional)*
12. The Vows
13. The Questions *(optional to Vows)*
14. Ring Ceremony, or
15. The Questions/Ring Ceremony Options
16. Various Ceremony Options *(optional)*
17. The Priest's Blessing *(not optional)*
18. Prayer **Options**
19. The Pronouncement
20. The Benediction
21. The Announcement
22. Recessional



The options to each part of the wedding ceremony follow so that you can tailor your ceremony the way you would like it. You are welcome to alter the optional parts reworded to your liking.

Wedding Ceremony Options

The Following sections are different choices you can make to include in your program. At the end is a form to make it easy as to which sections you wanted and what options in those sections you wanted.

❖ **PROCESSIONAL** (Optional, but traditional)

Typically, the Priest will either escort the Groom and/or the Groom's party up to the altar or front of the ceremony room prior and stand in wait for the Bridal party to enter by themselves. Or the Priest will walk up the side aisle with the Groom and stand in wait for the Wedding party to begin processing as couples usually accompanied by music to the front of the ceremony.

In either case, the Wedding Party parts in front of the priest to go their respective side of the altar or equivalent. Then everyone stands as the wedding song begins while the bride is escorted up the main aisle by her father or the one giving her away.

❖ **THE GIVING:** (Optional) (Yet a wonderful way to involve the parents into the ceremony)

The priest addresses the bride as she stands with the presenter in front of him using any of the following options.

Possible Responses by the parents or presenters:

- I do!
- We do!
- Her Family and I do!
- Her Mother and I do!

1. (Option 1)

Priest: And so, we begin by asking, who gives this woman to be married to this man?

2. (Option 2)

Priest: Who presents this woman and this man to be married to each other?

3. (Option 3)

Priest: Doubly blessed is the couple, which comes to the marriage altar with the approval and blessings of their families and friends. Who has the honor of presenting this woman to be married to this man?

4. (Option 4)

Priest: Who supports this woman in her commitment to this man?

5. (Option 5) (This option includes both sets of parents and/or presenters)

Priest: Who presents **N. and N.**, who seek the blessing of God and the Church on their love and life together?

Note: After responding “I/we do”, the parent/presenter can kiss or embrace the bride then he/she would take her right hand and join it with the left hand of the groom and wish them happiness.

In Option 5, both the groom and bride would meet in front of the priest accompanied by both parents/presenters who would respond, “**We do**” and express their approval to the couple and then return to their places.

The bride and groom holding hands turn toward the priest and the priest welcomes them followed by a formal welcome addressed to everyone which is (optional).

❖ **WELCOME:** (Recommended)

1. (Option 1)

Good evening. It is truly a blessing from heaven for two people to find one another and to love so deeply that they embrace the holy bond of matrimony. That is why we are all here today, to witness and celebrate **N. and N.’s** commitment to their blessed union. On behalf of them, I welcome all of you.

2. (Option 2)

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

3. (Option 3)

Good afternoon and welcome! We gather together here as family, to celebrate the love that **N. and N.**, have for each other. Together we give social recognition to their decision to commit their lives with full acceptance of each other. We encourage them to begin this journey in joy and true love.

We read in Sacred Scripture, “Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, it is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love never fails. In the end these three will remain, faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love!”

4. (Option 4) [A passage from Mark Twain]

Good Afternoon, we begin with a short excerpt from noted author Mark Twain: This day will be the mightiest day in the history of our lives, the holiest, & the most generous toward us both—for it makes of two fractional lives a whole; it gives to two purposeless lives a work, & doubles the strength of each whereby to perform it; it gives to two questioning natures a reason for living, & something to live for; it will give a new gladness to the sunshine, a new fragrance to the flowers, a new beauty to the earth, a new

mystery to life; & it will give a new revelation to love, a new depth to sorrow, a new impulse to worship God.

5. (Option 5)

Good afternoon! I will start by welcoming all of the guests present today, many of whom have traveled long distances to be here, to celebrate the uniting of **N. and N.**, in the bond of marriage. Marriage is a gift shared by two people who are in love, and they are honored to be supported by you, their family, and friends. Some of you have known **N. and N.**, for many years, others for much less time, but all of you have meant something special to them, which is why you were all asked to witness this special moment in their lives today.

6. (Option 6) [Combines a Welcome and the Charge]

Good afternoon! How beautiful is the day that is touched by love! May this be a moment to be remembered and cherished.

Marriage is a very special spiritual connection between two people united for a common purpose, bringing love and trust together into single focus. We have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining of this man and this woman in Holy Matrimony. God established the bond and covenant of marriage in creation, and our Lord Jesus Christ adorned this manner of life by His presence and first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. It signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and His Church, and Holy Scripture commends it to be honored among all who are gathered here.

The union of wife and husband in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and their nurture in the knowledge and love of God. Therefore, marriage is not to be entered into lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.

Into this holy union, **N., and N.**, now come to be joined. If any of you can show just cause why they may not lawfully be married, speak now; or forever hold your peace.

7. Welcoming Add-on (Optional addition to any Welcome above)

And although this is their day, it is also a tribute to all of you. For knowing you and interacting with you has helped to make **N. and N.**, whom they needed to be to find each other. They would like to thank you all for that.

Each of you are the threads of which are woven the tapestry of their lives. Each one of you is an important piece in the story it tells. It is the fabric that they wrap around themselves and take comfort in when the world seems cold. And on days like today when everything is right in their world, that tapestry is proudly spread out and displayed for everyone to see, with all the glorious colors and textures that your diversity adds.

Each of you hold a place in their hearts reserved for those that they have chosen to call “Family’ and ‘Friends’” and they are deeply grateful for each and every one of you here today! On behalf of them, I welcome all of you.

❖ **INVOCATIONS**: (Not optional for priest to be present)

1. **(Option 1)** (preferred and mandatory for Catholic Church Weddings)

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

2. **(Option 2)**

✠ ✠ ✠ Grace, peace, and mercy be unto you; from the One Who is and was and is to come! Amen.

3. **(Option 3)**

Priest: Blessed be God: ✠ ✠ ✠ Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People: And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever. Amen.

❖ **INVOCATIONAL PRAYER**: (Optional, but a beautiful way to begin your ceremony for those who would like to start with a brief prayer.)

1. **(Option 1)**

Let us pray: Beloved Creator, Essence of Love, and Source of Hope, open our hearts and fill us with Your Presence. You graciously give to us the longing for love and the capability of loving. We give You thanks for **N. and N.**, for their beautiful hearts, for their willing spirits, and for the example of love that they embody here today. Elevate us to an awareness of the Sacred and the Eternal, as we celebrate this miraculous moment in their lives. Be with them on this joyous occasion of showing their love and making their vows; and be with us, their witnesses, that we might all be inspired by the blessings shared today. Amen.

2. **(Option 2)**

Let us pray: Almighty God, hear our prayers for **N. and N.**, who have come here today to be united in the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony. Increase their faith in You and in each other, and through them bless Your church. Make their love fruitful so that they may be living witnesses to Your divine love in the world. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

3. **(Option 3)** [Invocational Prayer with Consent]

N. and N., you have come together here today so that the Lord may seal and strengthen your love in the presence of the Church's minister and this community of your family and friends. In this way, you will be strengthened to keep mutual and lasting faith with each other and to carry out the duties of marriage. And so, in the presence of the church, this community of your family and friends, I ask you to state your intentions by the promises and vows you will declare before us this day. Amen. (**Jump to Vow Prefaces p. 35**).

❖ FOUNDATIONS:

1. (Option 1)

Marriage is a gift from God, a gift from God's heart of Love. **N. and N.**, in getting to know you both, I can see you know some of the great blessing's marriage has to offer. It is an opportunity to feel the joy of taking care of someone who takes care of you, to be challenged towards growth yet gently nurtured, to love deeply and receive it in return. It is about trust, friendship and having a partner to share all life has to offer. It is a commitment to participate in a process of mutual evolution, understanding and forgiveness. It is indeed a sacred union to be treated with reverence.

Marriage is not a place to hide from the world. It is a safe place to grow and become wiser. It is a place to evolve into better people; so that you can go out in the world and make a difference by spreading the joy and wisdom that you have found with each other.

Bride's N., Groom's N. is a gift to you from God, 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 to see the good in this man, to accept him for who he is and who he shall be. In this way, God's purpose shall be accomplished in this relationship. May this *man* find the kingdom of heaven through the love you share.

And so, it is with you also **Groom's N.**, that although **Bride's N.**, is God's gift to you, *she* is not a gift intended for you alone. You are asked by God to love *this woman*, so that in your love she might find *herself* as God has created her; so beautiful, strong and true, so true that the entire world might be blessed by the presence of a *woman* who shines God's light. 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 on forever.

May you both create, with God, a piece of heaven on earth.

2. (Option 2)

Marriage is the beginning of a new life, a chance at fulfilling long held dreams, and an opportunity for great personal and spiritual growth. Marriage endures through the ages of trends and fads. Marriage thrives and continues to live as a promise of a beautiful dream come true. As long as individuals are drawn together by God, marriage will be a natural unfolding of that relationship.

Feelings come alive at a wedding: Great happiness, some sadness. Some apprehension and sometimes just pure relief! There is an acute awareness that something special, something that goes to the very heart of life, is about to happen. Something is gone forever, and something is born, brand-new and tender. Something to be nurtured and cared for, protected and cherished, challenged and strengthened your never before created marriage.

Each of you brings gifts to the other today. Gifts of hope and laughter, focus and seriousness of purpose. Sensitivity and recognition of the beautiful and the profound. Since childhood, you have searched for and dreamed about that special someone who would embody and express the gifts you now stand ready to give and to receive. But these gifts are not to be yours alone. A strong and resilient marriage is not an escape from the world but a contribution to it.

3. (Option 3)

Marriage is a supreme sharing, perhaps the greatest and most challenging adventure in 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 these sacred vows have their lives blended together into one, as the waters of two rivers are adjoined at a fork, they become stronger and greater together.

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 a loss of oneself, but rather a giving over of oneself to another, a transformation of self in which you learn to think of the other and what “*we need*” rather than what “*I need*”. Keeping this ‘us’ always in mind will challenge both of you to discover more of the other person and how much you can do together.

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 must acquire constant communication through talking and listening while truly trying to understand each other. Your constant helping, supporting, and believing in each other will bind you daily to a growing mutual love. May you learn to forgive and respect each other while appreciating your differences. Remember to make the important things matter while letting go of the little annoyances. Be faithful and true so that you may never fall out of love! This ceremony and all here gathered today serve simply as witnesses in your affirmation to begin a new life together as husband and wife.

4. (Option 4) [“*On Marriage*” by Kahlil Gibran]

You were born together and together you shall be forevermore.

You shall be together when the white wings of death scatter your days.

Ay you shall be together in the silent memory of God.

But, let there be spaces in your togetherness.

And let the winds of the heavens dance between you. Love one another but make not a bond of love.

Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls. Fill each other’s cup but drink not from one cup.

Give one another your bread but eat not from the same loaf.

Sing and dance together and be joyous but let each one of you be alone.

Even the strings of the lute 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 to near together:
 For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
 And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.

5. (Option 5)

Sooner or later, we begin to understand that love is more than verses on valentines and romance in movies. We begin to know that love is here and now, real, and true, the most important thing in our lives. For love is the creator of our favorite memories and the foundation of our fondest dreams. Without love, we merely exist. With love, we truly begin to live!

For love is a promise that is always kept, a fortune that can never be spent, a seed that can flourish in even the most unlikely place. And this radiance that never fades, this mysterious and magical joy is the greatest treasure of all - one known only by those who truly love.

And so, we are here today together as friends, relatives, and family to mark the end of one beginning and to recognize officially a new beginning which for **N. and N.** serve as a public affirmation of their friendship and their love.

Someone once said: "The most wonderful of all things in life, is the discovery of another human being with whom one's relationship has a growing depth, beauty and joy as the years increase. This love between two human beings is a most marvelous thing; it cannot be found by looking for it or by passionately wishing for it. It's a Divine destiny."

N. and N. would like this day to mean something special to you, as their guests. Those who are married may want to silently renew and reaffirm your vows today by gently taking the hand of your partner during this ceremony. Others may also want to join hands and think about what it means to be a friend, for marriage is built first on friendship.

N. and N., remember that there are no ties on earth so sweet, none so tender as those you are about to assume. There are no vows so solemn as those you are about to make. There is no institution of earth so sacred as that of the union you will form, for the true home is not only the place in which you will live but is also the dwelling place where each lives in the heart and mind of the other.

6. (Option 6)

Marriage is a promise made in the sight of God years ago and only yesterday. It is a promise kept day in, day out, for years and years, while two individuals become different people than when they first met, yet remain the same, until one of them takes their last breath. Before and after children, with and without children, even because of the children, marriage means they work together at everything from maximizing joy to making the mortgage payments.

They work hard at everything from doing the laundry to bringing home flowers in the middle of winter, whether the winter is seasonal or emotional. They make a promise, and marriage is a promise kept. Marriage is a couple who discovers a little bit more each day, to their surprise and delight and sometimes

shock and chagrin, that in their togetherness and individuality they have an ongoing experience of intimacy with God. A God who is Love, and who inspires each of them to become much more than they are.

7. (Option 7) [long form]

N. and N., I remind you both that true marriage is the holiest of all earthly unions. It is to be entered into reverently, consciously and with full understanding of its significance. To be complete, marriage must be spiritual as well as an earthly estate. When it is Spiritual in thought, purpose, plan, and action, it becomes the harmonious, peaceful, and happy union for man and woman.

The state of matrimony is true marriage only when it is based upon a deep, inner communion of two souls who find completion, each in the other. Today, your separate lives, each with your individual memories, desires and hopes, merge into one life.

But happiness in marriage is never something that just happens. A good marriage must be created. In the art of marriage, the little things are the big things. Remember that in a strong marriage:

- It is never being too old to hold hands.
- It is remembering to say, "I love you" (*out loud*), at least once a day.
- It is never going to sleep angry.
- It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family.
- It is at no time taking the other for granted. . . for what you take for granted, disappears.
- It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice, but in a spirit of joy.
- It is having the capacity to forgive and not bring it up later.
- It is a common search for the good and the beautiful in each other.
- It is not expecting the husband to wear a halo or the wife to have the wings of an angel.
- It is not looking for perfection in each other.
- It is cultivating flexibility, patience, understanding and a sense of humor.
- It is not only marrying the right partner, but also *being* the right partner.

Such a love requires that you be totally honest with yourself and your mate, that you ask for what you want, act even though you are afraid, share your feelings and listen but leave your partner free to be who they really are. In other words, always love your partner for who they are, not for who you think they should be. Always remember, "Relationships are something that must be worked on all the time, not only when they are broken and need to be fixed. Never stop doing the things that brought you together in the first place."

So now your friends and family gather here today, in loving solidarity as they behold your magnificence in coming together with a courageous love that is empowering to you and everyone here. When times call for you to be apart, may you always return to your togetherness in the same spirit of love that you are feeling in this moment. In an even greater way, we pray that your love thrives each day to the very end where you will be able to look into each other's eyes and say in just a glance: "Your love is amazing and has

transformed and healed me always. You are my heart and my world. I do not want to leave you, but I go and I will wait for you”.

8. (Option 8) [short form of Option 7]

N. and N., I remind you both that true marriage is the holiest of all earthly unions. It is to be entered into reverently, consciously and with full understanding of its significance.

The state of matrimony is a true marriage only when it is based upon a deep, inner communion of two souls who find completion, each in the other. Today, your separate lives merge into one life.

You must always remember that a good marriage must be created. For a strong marriage is one where you will never be too old to hold hands and where you always remember to say, ‘*I love you*’, at least once a day. It is when you never go to sleep angry or take the other for granted. It is a common search for the good and the beautiful in the other. For marriage is always characterized by kindness, passion, and courage that join to make a lasting love.

(Choose or omit either ending, just indicate the choice in the comments section of the checklist)

Ending A

So now your friends and family gather here today, in loving solidarity as they behold your magnificence in joining together with a courageous love that is empowering and inspiring to all. When times call for you to be apart, may you always return to your togetherness in the same spirit of love that you are feeling in this moment. In an even greater way, we pray that your love thrives each day to the very end where you will be able to look into each other’s eyes and say in just a glance: “Your love is amazing and has transformed and healed me always. You are my heart and my world. I do not want to leave you, but I go and I will wait for you”.

Ending B

So now your friends and family gather here today, in loving solidarity as they behold your magnificence in joining together with a courageous love that is empowering and inspiring to all. All present are witness to a bond so sacred and highly esteemed by God Who established that together as **one** you are so much stronger than you are alone by yourselves. Divine wisdom has created this formidable union on the basis of a loving exchange of giving and receiving that forges the way to great successes and triumphs. Life becomes difficult when the unity weakens and so remember the vows you are going to make and the holy wedding rings you will exchange as a reminder that God has faith in you both as well as your family and friends.

❖ **HONORING** (Optional)

1. **Parental Honoring** (Optional)

N. and N. want to acknowledge their parents on this occasion. **N. and N.** 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 ***

2. Silent Blessing (Optional)

N. and N. would like to pause to remember those who could not be with us today. Though they are absent physically, we invoke, through our thoughts and prayers, their loving presence. We pray that God might multiply beyond measure the blessings from these loved ones to this loving couple, and any children who might one day be a part of this union.

Now, from our hearts, we ourselves visualize and sanctify all the blessings we would bestow on **N. and N.** in their lives as a couple and a family that they now create. And in our sincere desire to bless, we in turn, are blessed also. Let us now pause briefly, close our eyes, and bring to mind any loved ones who could not be here today.

(a brief time of silence is honored)

Priest: Blessed Be.

3. Silent Blessing & Parental Honoring (Combined Version) (Optional)

N. and N. want 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 ***

N. and N., also wish to remember those who could not be with us today. Though they are absent physically, we invoke, through our thoughts and prayers, their loving presence.

We pray that God might multiply beyond measure the blessings from these loved ones to this loving couple. We now close our eyes and bring to mind any loved ones who could not be here today. And in our sincere desire to bless, we in turn, are blessed also.

(a brief time of silence is honored)

Priest: Blessed Be.

1. The Mother's Kiss (Option for Honoring Mothers)

Their mother's lips were the first to kiss them and bring them into this world, and today a mother's love – together with their blessings – will be the first to send them on their way to their new life together as husband and wife.

And now it is time for **N. and N.** as single people to receive a last kiss from their mothers before they become husband and wife. **Bride's N.**, and her mother (**Bride's mother N.**), and **Groom's N.**, and his mother, (**Groom's mother's N.**), will now offer this kiss.

Priest: Mothers. . . please kiss the Bride and Groom! (or **N. and N.**)

❖ The READINGS (Optional)

All the readings choices that serve as samples are listed on pages (13-32). If you want to skip them for now and come back or have your own go to page 33 to continue choosing options for your ceremony.



Sample Readings, Poems and Prayers that can be used within your ceremony:

1. Traditional Catholic Readings

First Reading: Old Testament Readings

Male and female, He created them. (Genesis 1:26-28, 31)

The two of them become one body. (Genesis 2:18-24)

In his love for Rebekah, Isaac found solace after the death of his mother. (Genesis 24:48-51, 58-67)

May he grant you mercy and peace. (Tobit 7:9-10, 11-15)

Allow us to live together to a happy old age. (Tobit 8:5-7)

The woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. (Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31)

Stern as death is love. (Song of Songs 2:8-10, 14, 16; 8:6-7)

Like the sun rising in the Lord's heavens, the beauty of a virtuous wife is the radiance of her home. (Sirach 26:1-4, 13-16)

I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. (Jeremiah 31:31-32a, 33- 34a)

Responsorial Psalms

The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord (Psalm 33:12, 18, 20-21, 22)

I will bless the Lord at all times (Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9)

The Lord is kind and merciful (Psalm 103:1-2, 8, 13, 17-18)

Happy are those who do what the Lord commands (Psalm 112:1-2, 3-4, 5-7, 7-8, 9)

Happy are those who fear the Lord (Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5)

The Lord is compassionate to all his creatures (Psalm 145:8-9, 10, 15, 17-18)

Let all praise the name of the Lord (Psalm 148:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14)

Second Reading: New Testament Readings

What will separate us from the love of Christ? (Romans 8:31-35, 37-39).

Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. (Romans 12:1-2, 9-18 [long form] or Romans 12:1-2, 9-13 [short form])

Welcome one another as Christ welcomed you. (Romans 15:1b-3a, 5-7, 13)

Your body is a temple of the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:13-15, 17-20)

If I do not have love, I gain nothing. (1 Corinthians 12:31 - 13:13)

This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the Church. (Ephesians 5:2, 21-33 [long form] or Ephesians 5:2, 25-32 [short form])

The God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:4-9)

And over all these put-on love, that is, the bond of perfection. (Colossians 3:12-17)

Let marriage be held in honor by all. (Hebrews 13:1-4a, 5-6b)

Be of one mind, sympathetic, loving toward one another. (1 Peter 3:1-9)

Love in deed and in truth (1 John 3:18-24)

God is love (1 John 4:7-12)

Blessed are those who have been called to the wedding feast of the Lamb. (Revelation 19:1, 5-9)

Gospel Readings

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. (Matthew 5:1-12)

You are the light of the world. (Matthew 5:13-16)

A wise man built his house on rock. (Matthew 7:21, 24-29 [long form] or Matthew 7:21, 24-25 [short form])

What God has united; man must not separate. (Matthew 19:3-6)

This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it. (Matthew 22:35-40)

They are no longer two, but one flesh. (Mark 10:6-9)

Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee. (John 2:1-11)

Remain in my love. (John 15:9-12)

This is my commandment: love one another. (John 15:12-16)

That they may be brought to perfection as one. (John 17:20-26 [long form] or 17:20-23 [short form])

2. (Reading 2)

1 Corinthians 13 (often used in Christian weddings)

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love,
I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge,
and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love,
I am nothing.

If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love,
I gain nothing.

Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful.
It is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful.
It does not rejoice at wrong but rejoices in the right.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
 Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away;
 as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect;
 but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away.

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child;
 when I became a man, I gave up childish ways.

For now, we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.
 Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood.

So, faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

3. (Reading 3)

Psalm 1 (often used in Jewish or interfaith weddings)

Blessed are the man and the woman who have grown beyond themselves and have seen through their separations. They delight in the way things are and keep their hearts open, day and night. They are like trees planted near flowing rivers, which bear fruit when they are ready. Their leaves will not fall or wither.

Everything they do will succeed.

4. (Reading 4)

The Invitation ~ Oriah ~

It doesn't interest me
 what you do for a living.
 I want to know
 what you ache for
 and if you dare to dream
 of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me
 how old you are.
 I want to know
 if you will risk
 looking like a fool
 for love

for your dream
for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me
what planets are
squaring your moon...
I want to know
if you have touched
the center of your own sorrow
if you have been opened
by life's betrayals
or have become shriveled and closed
from fear of further pain.

I want to know
if you can sit with pain
mine or your own
without moving to hide it
or fade it
or fix it.

I want to know
if you can be with joy
mine or your own
if you can dance with wildness
and let the ecstasy fill you
to the tips of your fingers and toes
without cautioning us
to be careful
to be realistic
to remember the limitations
of being human.

It doesn't interest me
if the story you are telling me
is true.

I want to know if you can
disappoint another
to be true to yourself.
If you can bear
the accusation of betrayal

and not betray your own soul.
If you can be faithless
and therefore trustworthy.

I want to know if you can see Beauty
even when it is not pretty
every day.
And if you can source your own life
from its presence.

I want to know
if you can live with failure
yours and mine
and still stand at the edge of the lake
and shout to the silver of the full moon,
“Yes.”

It doesn't interest me
to know where you live
or how much money you have.
I want to know if you can get up
after the night of grief and despair
weary and bruised to the bone
and do what needs to be done
to feed the children.

It doesn't interest me
who you know
or how you came to be here.
I want to know if you will stand
in the center of the fire
with me
and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me
where or what or with whom
you have studied.
I want to know
what sustains you
from the inside
when all else falls away.

I want to know
 if you can be alone
 with yourself
 and if you truly like
 the company you keep
 in the empty moments.

5. (Reading 5)

The Key to Love ~ Anonymous ~

The key to love is understanding
 The ability to comprehend not only the spoken word,
 but those unspoken gestures,
 the little things that say so much by themselves.

The key to love is forgiveness
 to accept each other's faults and pardon mistakes,
 without forgetting, but with remembering
 what you learn from them.

The key to love is sharing
 Facing your good fortunes as well as the bad, together;
 both conquering problems, forever searching for ways
 to intensify your happiness.

The key to love is giving
 without thought of return,
 but with the hope of just a simple smile,
 and by giving in but never giving up.

The key to love is respect
 realizing that you are two separate people, with different ideas;
 that you don't belong to each other,
 that you belong with each other, and share a mutual bond.

The key to love is inside us all
 It takes time and patience to unlock all the ingredients
 that will take you to its threshold; it is the continual learning process that demands a lot of work
 but the rewards are more than worth the effort.

And that is the key to love!

6. (Reading 6)

On Friendship ~ Roy Croft ~ (also called 'Love'; also called 'To my Friend')

I love you,
not for what you are,
but what I am, when I am with you.

I love you not only
for what you have made of yourself,
but what you are making of me.

I love you
for the part of me that you bring out.
I love you
for putting your hand into my heaped-up heart
and passing over all the frivolous and weak things that you cannot
help dimly seeing there,
and for drawing out into the light
all the beautiful and radiant things that no one else has looked
quite far enough to find...

I love you
because you have done more than any creed could have
done to make me good,
and more than any fate could have done to make me
happy.

You have done it without a touch,
without a word,
without a sign.
You have done it by being yourself.
Perhaps that is what being a friend means after all.

7. (Reading 7)

What is Love? ~ Susan Polis Schultz ~

“Love is . . . Being happy for the other person when they are happy, Being sad for the person when they are sad, Being together in good times, And being together in bad times.

LOVE IS THE SOURCE OF STRENGTH.

Love is . . . Being honest with yourself at all times, Being honest with the other person at all times,
Telling, listening, respecting the truth, And never pretending.

LOVE IS THE SOURCE OF REALITY.

Love is . . . An understanding so complete that you feel as if you are a part of the other person,
Accepting the other person just the way they are, And not trying to change them to be something else.

LOVE IS THE SOURCE OF UNITY.

Love is . . . The freedom to pursue your own desires while sharing your experiences with the other
person, The growth of one individual alongside of and together with the growth of another individual.

LOVE IS THE SOURCE OF SUCCESS.

Love is . . . The excitement of planning things together, The excitement of doing things together.

LOVE IS THE SOURCE OF THE FUTURE.

Love is . . . The fury of the storm, The calm in the rainbow.

LOVE IS THE SOURCE OF PASSION.

Love is . . . Giving and taking in a daily situation, Being patient with each other's needs and desires.

LOVE IS THE SOURCE OF SHARING.

Love is . . . Knowing that the other person will always be with you regardless of what happens, Missing
the other person when they are away but remaining near in heart at all times.

LOVE IS THE SOURCE OF SECURITY.

LOVE IS . . . THE SOURCE OF LIFE!"

8. (Reading 8)

F rom T his D ay F orward

F rom this day forward, let us laugh together, and plan
together, let us find our favorite places, and go
together. L et us enjoy the sunshine, and the rain, being
alone together, and in crowds together.

F rom this day forward, together, let us love!

L et us walk together yet not as one, but such that our
shadows are separate and distinct, such that our souls are
unbound and free. L et us share our time, yet do not give all
your time, nor take all of mine for in order to develop to the
fullest, to be free, we must have solitude and individuality.

L et me wander in solitude, when I need to be alone, yet be

near, when I need you.

Give freely of your love, but do not smother me, my soul must breathe a free air. Take my love, but do not demand it, for love given of obligation, is stale and without life.

Share my life, but do not try to shape it. Let me share your life, but do not let it revolve around me. Accept me as I am, do not attempt to change me to fit your dreams. Respect me for what I am, not for what I was or one day may be. Share yourself with me, but do not allow me to limit your freedom
or bind your soul.

Let us share our minds, thoughts, goals, values, and dreams. Let us develop these within ourselves without restriction or loss of freedom. Thus, our two free souls, may wander together as they develop in freedom.

As we share our lives, as we walk through life together, know my love is yours, but not my soul for it must be free.

9. (Reading 9)

The Princess Bride ~ William Goldman ~

"Do I love you? My God, if your love were a grain of sand, mine would be a universe of beaches... I have stayed these years in my hovel because of you. I have taught myself languages because of you. I have made my body strong because I thought you might be pleased by a strong body. I have lived my life with only the prayer that some sudden dawn you might glance in my direction. I have not known a moment in years when the sight of you did not send my heart careening against my rib cage. I have not known a night when your visage did not accompany me to sleep. There has not been a morning when you did not flutter behind my waking eyelids...

I love you. Okay? Want it louder? I love you. Spell it out, should I? I ell-oh-vee-ee why-oh-you. Want it backward? You love I."

10. (Reading 10)

From this Day Forward ~ Marcia A. Newton ~

From this day forward and forevermore,
we're a heavenly union of two souls.

From this day forward, when two become one,
two hearts, one flesh, in the eyes of our God.

From this day forward, we walk together.
Our lives are joined, now and forever.
From this day forward, we hold each other.
We become one in our God forever.

From this day forward, we vow together
to be patient and kind and trust one another.
From this day forward, we vow together
to endure and always love forever.

From this day forward, we wear rings of gold,
for better or worse, in youth and in old.
From this day forward, until the end of time,
we are one body, one life, one mind.

From this day forward, our lives will be blessed
with children from God and a home to rest.
From this day forward, with love in our hearts,
we will be one until death do us part.

11. (Reading 11)

From To Know Yourself ~ Swami Satchidananda ~

A wedding is between two reflections of God. Two pairs of eyes see one vision. They are dedicated to serve one another and the humanity at large. Two minds come together to help each other realize their true nature. Going side by side with the right partner is a good way to reach God quickly. When the husband's and the wife's love for each other blends together and becomes love of God, marriage is a divine institution.

12. (Reading 12)

I Carry Your Heart With Me... E.E Cummings.

I carry your heart with me (I carry it in
my heart) I am never without it (anywhere
I go you go, my dear; and whatever is done
by only me is your doing, my darling)

I fear
 no fate (for you are my fate, my sweet) I want
 no world (for beautiful you are my world, my true)
 and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant
 and whatever a sun will always sing is you

here is the deepest secret nobody knows
 (here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud
 and the sky of the sky of a tree called life, which grows
 higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)
 and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart
 I carry your heart (I carry it in my heart)

13. (Reading 13)

Love Sonnet XVII ~ Pablo Neruda ~

I don't love you as if you were a rose of salt, topaz,
 or arrow of carnations that propagate fire:
 I love you as one loves certain obscure things,
 secretly, between the shadow and the soul.

I love you as the plant that doesn't bloom but carries
 the light of those flowers, hidden, within itself,
 and thanks to your love the tight aroma that arose
 from the earth lives dimly in my body.

I love you without knowing how, or when, or from where,
 I love you directly without problems or pride:
 I love you like this because I don't know any other way to love,
 except in this form in which I am not nor are you,
 so close that your hand upon my chest is mine,
 so close that your eyes close with my dreams.

14. (Reading 14)

When You Love Someone ~ Anne Morrow Lindburgh ~

“When you love someone, you do not love them all the time, in exactly the same way, from moment to moment. It is an impossibility. The only continuity possible, in life as in love, is in growth, in fluidity, in freedom, in the sense that dancers are free, barely touching as they pass, but partners in the same pattern.

The only real security is not in owning or possessing, not in demanding or expecting, not in hoping even. Security in a relationship lies neither in looking back to what was in nostalgia, nor forward to what might be in dread or anticipation but living in the present relationship and accepting it as it is now. One must accept the security of the winged life, of ebb and flow, of intermittency.”

15. (Reading 15)

Blessing for A Marriage ~ James Dillet Freeman ~

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

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

A mountain needs a valley to be complete;
the valley does not make the mountain less, but more;
and the valley is more a valley because it has a mountain towering over it.
So let it be with you and you.

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

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

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

May you embrace one another, but not out encircle one another.

May you succeed in all important ways with one another,
and not fail in the little graces.

May you look for things to praise, often say, “I love you!”
and take no notice of small faults.

If you have quarrels that push you apart, may both of you hope to have good sense enough to take the first step back.

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 even distant cities.

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.

16. (Reading 16)

"In One Another’s Souls,” ~ Rumi ~

“The moment I heard my first love story
I started looking for you,
not knowing how useless that was.

Lovers don't meet somewhere along the way.
They're in one another's souls all along."

17. (Reading 17)

Excerpt from The Bridge Across Forever ~ Richard Bach ~

A soul mate is someone who has locks that fit our keys, and keys to fit our locks. When we feel safe enough to open the locks, our truest selves step out and we can be completely and honestly who we are; we can be loved for who we are and not for who we're pretending to be. Each unveils the best part of the other. No matter what else goes wrong around us, with that one person we're safe in our own paradise. Our soul mate is someone who shares our deepest longings, our sense of direction. When we're two balloons, and together our direction is up, chances are we've found the right person. Our soul mate is the one who makes life come to life.

18. (Reading 18)

Marriage Joins Two People in The Circle Of Its Love ~ Edmund O'Neill ~

Marriage is a commitment to life, the best that two people can find and bring out in each other. It offers opportunities for sharing and growth that no other relationship can equal. It is a physical and an emotional joining that is promised for a lifetime.

Within the circle of its love, marriage encompasses all of life's most important relationships. A wife and a husband are each other's best friend, confidant, lover, teacher, listener, and critic. And there may come times when one partner is heartbroken or ailing, and the love of the other may resemble the tender caring of a parent for a child.

Marriage deepens and enriches every facet of life. Happiness is fuller, memories are fresher, commitment is stronger, even anger is felt more strongly, and passes away more quickly.

Marriage understands and forgives the mistakes life is unable to avoid. It encourages and nurtures new life, new experiences, and new ways of expressing a love that is deeper than life.

When two people pledge their love and care for each other in marriage, they create a spirit unique unto themselves, which binds them, closer than any spoken or written words. Marriage is a promise, a potential made in the hearts of two people who love each other and takes a lifetime to fulfill.

19. (Reading 19)

On Love ~ Thomas Kempis ~

Love is a mighty power, a great and complete good; Love alone lightens every burden and makes the rough places smooth.

It bears every hardship as though it were nothing and renders all bitterness sweet and acceptable. The love of Jesus is noble and inspires us to great deeds; it moves us always to desire perfection. Love aspires to high things and is held back by nothing base. Love longs to be free, a stranger to every worldly desire, lest its inner vision become dimmed, and lest worldly self-interest hinder it or ill fortune cast it down.

Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing wider, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller or better in heaven or earth; for love is born of God, (1 John 4:7) and can rest only in God, above all created things.

Love flies, runs, and leaps for joy; it is free and unrestrained. Love gives all for all, resting in One Who is highest above all things, from whom every good flows and proceeds. Love does not regard the gifts but turns to the Giver of all good gifts. Love knows no limits, but ardently transcends all bounds. Love feels no burden, takes no account of toil, attempts things beyond its strength; love sees nothing as impossible, for it feels able to achieve all things.

Love therefore does great things; it is strange and effective; while he who lacks love faints and fails.

20. (Reading 20)

What Is Love? ~ Author Unknown ~

Sooner or later, we begin to
 understand that love is
 more than verses on valentines and
 romance in the movies.
 We begin to know that love is here
 and now, real, and true,
 the most important thing in our lives.
 For love is the creator
 of our favorite memories and the
 foundation of our fondest dreams.
 Love is a promise that is always kept,
 a fortune that can never be
 spent, a seed that can flourish in even
 the most unlikely of places.
 And this radiance that never fades,
 this mysterious and magical joy, is the
 greatest treasure of all - one known
 only by those who love. ... *Unknown*

21. (Reading 21)

True Love ~ Helen Steiner Rice ~

True love is a sacred flame
That burns eternally,
And none can dim its special glow
Or change its destiny.

True love speaks in tender tones
And hears with gentle ear,
True love gives with open heart
And true love conquers fear.

True love makes no harsh demands
It neither rules nor binds,
And true love holds with gentle hands
The hearts that it entwines.

22. (Reading 22)

The Art of Marriage ~ Wilferd A. Peterson ~

Happiness in marriage is not something that just happens.

A good marriage must be created.

In the art of marriage, the *little things* are the *big things*...

It is never being too old to hold hands.

It is remembering to say "I love you" at least once a day.

It is never going to sleep angry.

It is at no time taking the other for granted;
the courtship should not end with the honeymoon,
it should continue through all the years.

It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives.

It is standing together facing the world.

It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family.

It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice, but in the spirit of joy.

It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.

It is not looking for perfection in each other. It is cultivating flexibility, patience, understanding and a sense of humor.

It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.

It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.

It is finding room for the things of the spirit. It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.

It is establishing a relationship in which the independence is equal, dependence is mutual and the obligation is reciprocal.

It is not only marrying the right partner; it is *being* the right partner.

It is discovering what marriage can be at its best.

23. (Reading 23)

Sonnet XVII (100 Love Sonnets, 1960)

I don't love you as if you were a rose of salt, topaz,
or arrow of carnations that propagate fire:
I love you as one loves certain obscure things,
secretly, between the shadow and the soul.

I love you as the plant that doesn't bloom and carries
the light of those flowers, hidden within itself
and thanks to your love the tight aroma that arose
from the earth lives dimly in my body.

I love you without knowing how, or when, or from where,
I love you simply, without problems or pride:
I love you like this because I don't know any other way to love,

except in this form in which I am not nor are you,
 so close that your hand upon my chest is mine,
 so close that your eyes close with my dreams.

24. (Reading 24) (Remembering Loved Ones)

‘We Remember Them’ ~ Sylvan Kamens & Rabbi Jack Riemer ~

At the rising sun and at its going down; We remember them.
 At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter; We remember them.
 At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring; We remember them.
 At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer; We remember them.
 At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of the autumn; We remember them.
 At the beginning of the year and when it ends; We remember them.
 As long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us as We remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength; We remember them.
 When we are lost and sick at heart; We remember them.
 When we have decisions that are difficult to make; We remember them.
 When we have joy we crave to share; We remember them.
 When we have achievements that are based on theirs; We remember them.
 For as long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us as, We remember them.

25. (Reading 25)

Union ~ Robert Fulghum ~

You have known each other from the first glance of acquaintance to this point of commitment. At some point, you decided to marry. From that moment of yes to this moment of yes, indeed, you have been making promises and agreements in an informal way. All those conversations that were held riding in a car or over a meal or during long walks - all those sentences that began with "When we're married" and continued with "I will and you will and we will" - those late-night talks that included "someday" and "somehow" and "maybe" - and all those promises that are unspoken matters of the heart. All these common things, and more, are the real process of a wedding.

The symbolic vows that you are about to make are a way of saying to one another, "You know all those things we've promised and hoped and dreamed—well, I meant it all, every word."

Look at one another and remember this moment in time. Before this moment you have been many things to one another - acquaintance, friend, companion, lover, dancing partner, and even teacher, for you have learned much from one another in these last few years. Now you shall say a few words that take you across a threshold of life, and things will never quite be the same between you. For after these vows, you shall say to the world, this - is my husband, this - is my wife.

26. (Reading 26)

The Gift ~Pam Brown~

“In you are flowers and firelight,
stars and songbirds,
the scent of summer,
the stillness just before dawn.

I love you today,
dressed in glory.

I will love you always-
dancing, singing, reading, making, planning, arguing.

I will love you cantankerous, and tired,
courageous and in terror,
joyful, fearful, and triumphant.

I will love you through all weathers and all change.

For all you are is precious to me.

And every day I live with you
and share your love
is a gift to me.”

27. (Reading 27)

I Promise ~ Dorothy Colgan ~

I promise to give you the best of myself
and ask of you no more than you can give.

I promise to respect you as your own person
and to realize that your interests, desires, and needs are no less important than my own.

I promise to share with you my time and attention
and to bring joy, strength, and imagination to our relationship.

I promise to keep myself open to you
to let you see through the window of my world into my innermost fears
and feelings, secrets, and dreams.

I promise to grow along with you
to be willing to face changes in order to keep our relationship alive and exciting.

I promise to love you in good times and bad
with all that I have to give, and all I feel inside in the only way I know how
completely and forever.

28. (Reading 28)

An Excerpt from “The Velveteen Rabbit” ~ Margery Williams ~

“What is REAL?” asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nanna came to tidy the room. “Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?”

“Real isn’t how you are made,” said the Skin Horse. “It’s a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real.”

“Does it hurt?” asked the Rabbit.

“Sometimes,” said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. “When you are Real you don’t mind being hurt.”

“Does it happen all at once, like being wound up,” he asked, “or bit by bit?”

“It doesn’t happen all at once,” said the Skin Horse. “You become. It takes a long time. That’s why it doesn’t happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in your joints and very shabby. But these things don’t matter at all, because once you are Real you can’t be ugly, except to people who don’t understand.”

29. (Reading 29)

How Falling in Love is Like Owning a Dog ~ Taylor Mali ~

First of all, it’s a big responsibility,
especially in a city like New York.

So, think long and hard before deciding on love.

On the other hand, love gives you a sense of security:
when you’re walking down the street late at night and you have a leash on love
no one's going to mess with you.

On cold winter nights, love is warm.

It lies between you and lives and breathes
and makes funny noises.

Love wakes you up all hours of the night with its needs.
It needs to be fed so it will grow and stay healthy.

Love doesn't like being left alone for long.

But come home and love is always happy to see you.

It may break a few things accidentally in its passion for life, but you can never be mad at love for long.

Love makes messes.

Love leaves you little surprises here and there.
Love needs lots of cleaning up after.

Sometimes you just want to get love fixed.
Sometimes you want to roll up a piece of newspaper

and swat love on the nose,
not so much to cause pain,
just to let love know *"Don't you ever do that again!"*
Sometimes love just wants to go out for a nice long walk.

Because love loves exercise.
It will run you around the block and leave you panting breathless.
Pull you in different directions
at once, or wind itself around and around you
until you're all wound up and you cannot move.

But love makes you meet people wherever you go.
People who have nothing in common but love
stop and talk to each other on the street.

Throw things away and love will bring them back, again, and again, and again.
But most of all, love needs love, lots of it.
And in return, love loves you and never stops.

❖ THE CHARGE & CONSENT

A charge is to remind a couple of their individual duties and roles in the marriage and prepare them for the vows they are about to take. A declaration of consent takes place in the form of a question asked by the officiant with a response from each partner. It is a public declaration that both are entering into the marriage contract willingly and without coercion.

1. (Option 1) – (Charge): (Optional)

To the Assembly:

Into this holy union, **N. and N.** now come to be joined. If any of you can show just cause why they may not lawfully be married, speak now; or else forever hold your peace.

From the Assembly: (typically no response).

To the couple:

N. and N., I require and charge you both, here in the presence of God Almighty, that if either of you know any reason why you may not be united in marriage lawfully, and in accordance with God's word, you do now confess it.

To the Assembly:

I now inquire of all present here: will all of you witnessing these promises do all in your power to uphold these two persons in their marriage?

From the Assembly:

We will.

2. (Option 2) – (Charge and Consent): (Catholic Version; Mandatory for Church weddings)

N. and N., you have come together in this church/chapel so that the Lord may seal and strengthen your love in the presence of the Church's minister and this community. Christ abundantly blesses this love. He has already consecrated you in baptism and now He enriches and strengthens you by a special sacrament so that you may assume the duties of marriage in mutual and lasting fidelity. And so, in the presence of the Church, I ask you to state your intentions.

(The priest then questions them about their freedom of choice, faithfulness to each other, and the acceptance and upbringing of children.)

N. and N., **have** you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage? **R.\ We have.**

Will you love and honor each other as man and wife for the rest of your lives? **R.\ We will.**

(The following question may be omitted if, for example, the couple is advanced in years.)

Will you accept children lovingly from God and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church? **R.\ We will.**

Each person answers the questions separately. The priest then invites the couple to declare their consent.

Priest:

Since it is your intention to enter into marriage, **join your right hands**, and declare your consent before God and His Church. **R.\ We will.**

The couple then declares their Vows and the Rings are Blessed and Exchanged.

3. (Option 3 -The Charge & Welcome) [Combined Version]

Dear friends in Christ, we have gathered together today to witness **N. and N.** publicly committing themselves to one another and, in the name of the holy Church, to bless their union: a relationship of mutual fidelity and steadfast love, forsaking all others, holding one another in tenderness and respect, in strength and bravery, as long as they live.

If any of you can show just cause why they may not be lawfully married, speak now; or else for ever hold your peace.

Then the Priest says to the couple to be married:

I require and charge you both, here in the presence of God, that if either of you know any reason why you may not be united in marriage lawfully, and in accordance with God's Word, you do now confess it.

(pause)

Therefore, in the name of Christ, let us all pray that this couple may be strengthened for the promises they make this day, and that we will have the generosity to support themselves in what they undertake and the wisdom to see God at work in their life together.

❖ VOW PREFACES

1. (Optional Preface 1) – used with any form below in advance of the Vows.

N. and N., since it is your intention to marry, join your hands, and with your promises bind yourselves to each other as husband and wife.

2. (Optional Preface 2) – used with any form below in advance of the Vows.

N. and N., I invite you now, illumined by the Word of God and strengthened by the prayer of this community, to make your covenant before God and the Church.

❖ VOWS

(Note: To combine ‘Rings’ with ‘Vows’, please see Vows – Option 7, Page 38)

Please note: For all the Vows Selections: Couples may say their own prepared vows or choose from options below. Also note that all Vows may be:

- a) read entirely by priest.
- b) read phrase by phrase by priest and repeated by wedding partners.
- c) read entirely by wedding partners
- d) read in unison after phrase given by priest

Note to Catholic Couples: The following phrase should be added ‘In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.’ to any Vows choice.

1. (Option 1) – Couple writes their own vows.

A) **N. and N.**, having thus committed themselves, now wish to declare their love for one another in words that they have written.

Or,

B) **N. and N.**, wishing now to thus commit themselves to one another, will declare their love for one another in words that they have written.

Vows – Advice – for couples who wish to write their own vows!

Penning your own wedding vows is no easy task -- it’s like writing poetry, public speaking and having the deepest conversation of your life all at once. Putting your promises on paper is an emotional, eye-opening, and often extremely memorable experience. Up for the challenge? Here's the homework you need to do (and the questions you should ask) to make your vows perfect!

A Note to Catholic Couples: The most important part of a Catholic wedding is what is commonly known as the exchange of vows. These words are the heart—the essential element—of the Sacrament of Marriage as they form the covenant that establishes the couple’s marriage. The Holy Church calls the exchange of vows, consent—that is, the act of will by which a man and a woman give themselves to each other and accept the gift of the other. Marriage cannot happen without the declaration of consent. The Rite of Marriage does provide several wording options for the exchange of consent, which are found below in their proper categories. However, one of the ways that the Church expresses the unity of all believers is through the unity of the liturgy (*in this case, the wedding ceremony*), especially in its essential parts. The mutual consent of the bride and groom to be married to one another is what brings about the grace of the sacrament and because the required consent is what makes the marriage, it is

important for everyone to be clear that the bride and groom have actually declared their mutual consent. Please let any of our priests know if you have concerns or questions.

2. (Option 2) - Traditional Vows

Priest: Please join hands, as you look into each other's eyes, and repeat after me:

(Groom) I, **N.**, take thee, **Bride's N.**, for my lawful wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health as long as we both shall live.

(Bride) I, **N.**, take thee, **Groom's N.**, for my lawful wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health as long as we both shall live.

3. (Option 3)

The couple faces each other while the **Priest** says to the **Bridegroom**,

Groom N., do you take **Bride's N.**, to be your wedded wife, to share your life openly, standing with her, in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, in hardship and in ease, to cherish and to love, so long as you both shall live?

Groom: I do

The **Priest** says to the **Bride**,

Bride's N., do you take **Groom's N.** to be your wedded husband, to share your life openly, standing with him, in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, in hardship and in ease, to cherish and to love, so long as you both shall live?

Bride: I do

4. (Option 4)

Priest: Please join hands, look into each other's eyes, and repeat together after me:

From this day forward,

I make a promise:

whatever happens,

you shall not walk alone. I'll stand by your side, and sleep in your arms,

I'll be the joy in your heart, and the food for your soul.

Through our brightest days and our darkest nights, I take you, into my heart.

May God bless us, with a great light, around our hearts, and around our home. I see your beauty, your innocence and light. May it shine.

May the world see how beautiful you are as I see how beautiful you are,
but may there be a special light that only I can see.

I give you, my heart.

May we feel this joy forever.

5. (Option 5) [soulmate]

Priest: Please join hands, look into each other's eyes, and repeat together after me:

From this day on

I choose you to be my beloved soul mate, to live with you and laugh with you.

I choose to stand by your side and sleep in your arms; to be joy to your heart and food to your soul; to
bring out the best in you always.

I choose to be the best I can be, just for you,

to celebrate with you in the good times and to endure with you in the bad times.

I choose to solace you when you are downhearted; to wipe your tears with my hands.

I choose to care for you with my entire being.

I choose to share with you everything that I have as we treat each other.

with tenderness, compassion, and love.

a. (Option 5a, Modified) Priest asks the questions above.

Priest: N. and N., from this day on do you choose you the other to be your beloved soul mate? Will you live with one another and laugh with another; Will you stand by each other and care for one another, always being joy to your hearts and food for your souls? Will you always endeavor to bring out the best in the other always, by being the best you can be, just for the other; celebrating in the good times; and struggling together in the bad; comforting when downhearted and caring for the other with your entire being; sharing everything that you have; as you treat one another with tenderness, compassion, and love, for the rest of your days?

R: I do/We do!

6. (Option 6)

This ring, without beginning or ending, is a symbol of my undying love for you. I give you this ring freely as I give you, my love.

7. (Option 7 – Combined with Rings)

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

Priest: Do you have your rings? (Response: “Yes”)

God, the Father, bless these rings ❖ ❖ ❖ and the two who exchange them. Fill them with your Holy Presence. Keep them safe in the circle of Your protection and love.

Priest: Please join hands and repeat after me:

I, **Groom**, take thee, **Bride**, for my lawful wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health as long as we both shall live.

I, **Bride**, take thee, **Groom**, for my lawful wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health as long as we both shall live.

Priest: Husband will place the ring on her left-hand ring finger.

The action can be done either done in **Silence** or both can say: “**I give you this ring to wear upon your hand as a symbol of our unity.**”

Priest: Wife will place the ring on his left-hand ring finger.

[For all the following vows the priest can whisper parts to each couple or they can be spoken by the officiant and answered by each couple. All these vows can also serve as a help to make your own.]

8. (Option 8)

Groom/Partner:

I promise to love and care for you, and I will try in every way to be worthy of your love.
I will always be honest with you, kind, patient and forgiving. I promise to try to be on time.
But most of all, I promise to be a true and loyal friend to you. I love you.

Bride/Partner:

I promise to love and care for you, and I will try in every way to be worthy of your love. I will always be honest with you, kind, patient and forgiving.
I promise to keep a sense of humor.
But most of all, I promise to be a true and loyal friend to you. I love you.

9. (Option 9)

Groom/Partner: then **Bride/Partner:**

I promise to be your lover, companion and friend, Your partner in parenthood,
Your ally in conflict,
Your greatest fan and your toughest adversary. Your comrade in adventure,
Your student and your teacher, Your consolation in disappointment, Your accomplice in mischief.
This is my sacred vow to you, my equal in all things.

10.(Option 10)

Groom/Partner: then **Bride/Partner:**

On this day,

I give you my heart, my promise,

That I will walk with you, hand in hand,

Wherever our journey leads us, living, learning, loving, together,

Forever.

11.(Option 1)

I believe in you, the person you will grow to be and the couple we will be together. With my whole heart, I take you as my wife/husband, acknowledging and accepting your faults and strengths, as you do mine.

I promise to be faithful and supportive and to always make our family's love and happiness my priority.

I will be yours in plenty and in want, in sickness and in health, in failure and in triumph.

I will dream with you, celebrate with you, and walk beside you through whatever our lives may bring.

You are my person -- my love and my life, today and always.

12. (Option 12a – unity version)

The **Bride** begins by repeating after the **priest**:

Groom's N., I believe in you, the person you will grow to be and the couple we will be together. With my whole heart, I take you as my wife/husband, acknowledging and accepting your faults and strengths, as you do mine. I promise to be faithful and supportive and to always make our family's love and happiness my priority.

The **Groom** concludes with the last passage by repeating after the **priest**:

Bride's N., I will be yours in plenty and in want, in sickness and in health, in failure and in triumph. I will dream with you, celebrate with you, and walk beside you through whatever our lives may bring.

(Then, together **they** say in unison by repeating after the **priest**):

“You are my person -- my love and my life, today and always. Today I give you, my heart.”

13. (Option 13)

You are my lover and my teacher,

You are my model and my accomplice, And you are my true counterpart.

I will love you, hold you and honor you,

I will respect you, encourage you and cherish you, In health and sickness,

Through sorrow and success, For all the days of my life.

14. (Option 14) (Catholic Traditional)

Priest: Since it is your intention to enter into marriage, join your right hands, and declare your consent before God and his Church.

(repeated version)

Groom: I, **Groom's N.**, take you, **Bride's N.**, to be my wife. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.

Bride: I, **Bride's N.**, take you, **N.**, to be my husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.

Or (response version)

Priest: **Groom's N.**, do you take **Bride's N.**, 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: **Bride's N.**, do you take **Groom's N.**, 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.**

15. (Option 15)

The **Groom** says:

I, **Groom's N.**, take you, **Bride's N.**, to be my wife; and I promise,
before God and these witnesses,
to be your loving and faithful husband; in plenty and in want;
in joy and in sorrow;
in sickness and in health.
as long as we both shall live.

The **Bride** says:

I, **Bride's N.**, take you, **Groom's N.**, to be my husband; and I promise,
before God and these witnesses,
to be your loving and faithful wife; in plenty and in want.
in joy and in sorrow.
in sickness and in health.
as long as we both shall live.

16. (Option 16)

The **Groom** says:

Before God and these witnesses, I, **Groom's N.**, take you, **Bride's N.**, to be my wife, and I promise to love you,
and to be faithful to you,
as long as we both shall live.

The **Bride** says:

Before God and these witnesses, I, **Bride's N.**, take you, **Groom's N.**, to be my husband, and I promise to love you,
and to be faithful to you,
as long as we both shall live.

17. (Option 17) (Based on The Covenant Hymn)

N., wherever you go, I will follow, wherever you live will be my home. Through days of blessing or sorrow, through mountains before us, even if vast, wherever you go, I am always with you. I will never leave you alone.

Whatever you dream, I will support you and when the stars call your name in the night, I will stand to help guide you. Though shadows of mist of cloud come in our future, together we bear until there's light. Like Abram and Sarah, we will stand, with only a simple promise in our hand, but lead where you dream and I will follow.

And if you should fall, you will find me, when no other friend can you claim; or when foes beat you down or betray you, and others desert you in shame. When home and dreams just aren't enough, faithful to you I will remain.

Wherever you die, I will be there, to sing you to sleep with a psalm, to soothe you with tales of our journey, your fears, and your doubts I will calm. We'll live when journeys are done forever, in memory as one, and we will be buried together, and awaken to greet a new dawn.

I promise you won't ever be alone; wherever you go, I am here.

18. (Option 18)

Groom:

I, **Groom's N.**, offer myself to you **Bride's N.**, to be your husband,
your friend, your lover, and your lifelong companion; to share my life with yours.
to build our dreams together,
to support you through times of trouble,
to help you become the person that you aspire to be and rejoice with you in times of happiness.

to treat you with respect, love, and loyalty
 through all the trials and triumphs of our lives together.
 This commitment is made in love, kept in faith, lived in hope,
 and eternally made new.

Bride:

I, **Bride's N.**, offer myself to you **Groom's N.**, to be your wife,
 your friend, your lover and your lifelong companion.
 to share my life with yours; to build our dreams together,
 to support you through times of trouble,
 to help you become the person that you aspire to be and rejoice with you in times of happiness.
 to treat you with respect, love, and loyalty
 through all the trials and triumphs of our lives together.
 This commitment is made in love, kept in faith, lived in hope,
 and eternally made new.

19. (Option 19)

Groom:

Bride's N., across the years, I will walk with you, in deep green forests.
 on shores of sand.
 and when our time on earth is through, in heaven too,
 you will have my hand.

Bride:

Groom's N., across the years, I will walk with you, in deep green forests.
 on shores of sand.
 and when our time on earth is through, in heaven too,
 you will have my hand.

20. (Option 20)

I, **N.**, take you **N.**, to be my wife/husband for a time I thought I would never know a deep and peaceful
 love again.

Then, you came along and offered me your heart.

You restored my faith in love, in my own goodness and value and
 in the idea of good things coming to those who wait. You are all good things to me.

I promise you my undying affection, support, respect, and admiration. I promise you that I will lift you
 up, as you have lifted me.

I promise that I will do my best and always try.

May my heart be your shelter and my arms be your home. Today I give you, my heart.

21. (Option 21)

In the name of God,

I, **N.**, give myself to you, **N.**, as your husband/wife/spouse

I will support and care for you by the grace of God: enduring all things, bearing all things.

I will hold and cherish you in the love of Christ: in times of plenty, in times of want.

I will honor and love you with the Spirit's help: forsaking all others,
as long as we both shall live. This is my solemn vow.

(or this),

In the name of God,

I, **N.**, give myself to you, **N.**, as your husband/wife/spouse

I will support and care for you: enduring all things, bearing all things. I will hold and cherish you:
in times of plenty, in times of want. I will honor and love you: forsaking all others,
as long as we both shall live. This is my solemn vow.

The Questions *(often used in place of above to acknowledge the Vows rather than recite it all)*

N. and N., if you are ready to step into the holy circle of matrimony, assuming all its rights, obligations, and abundant joys, please so indicate by joining hands.

Do you, **Bride's N.**, take this man, **Groom's N.**, as your husband, to love him and to honor him, to nurture, serve and support him, in times of joy and in times of difficulty? Do you promise to remain by his side regardless of what trouble befalls you, and in the presence of temptation to forsake this love, do you promise to remain steadfast and true? Do you promise with all your heart and soul to honor this vow till death do you part?

Response: "**I do**"

Do you, **Groom's N.**, take this woman, **Bride's N.**, as your wife, to love her and to honor her, to nurture, serve and support her, in times of joy and in times of difficulty? Do you promise to remain by her side regardless of what trouble befalls you, and in the presence of temptation to forsake this love, do you promise to remain steadfast and true? Do you promise with all your heart and soul to honor this vow till death do you part?

Response: "**I do**"

22. (Option 6) – with Children

Priest: And now, **children's N.**, do you promise to love and respect your parents as husband and wife? Do you promise to support their marriage and new family and accept the responsibility of being their child, and to encourage them and support them in your new life together?

❖ RING CEREMONY

1. (Option 1)

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

Do you have your rings? (They respond, “**Yes**”)

The circle has long been a symbol of spirit and the power of God. The sky and the earth are round. The wind in its greatest power whirls. The sun and moon, both round, come forth and go down again in a circle. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing and always come back again to where they were. Without beginning or end and with no point of weakness, the circle is a reminder of the eternal quality of God and of unending strength. Let the seamless circle of these rings become the symbol of your endless love and unending faithfulness. Your wedding rings are most special because they say that even in your uniqueness you have chosen to be bonded, to allow the presence of another human being to enhance who you are. Your rings carry a potent double message: We are individuals and, yet we belong together; we are not alone. As you wear them through time, they will reflect not only who you are but also the glorious union that you are now creating.

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

God, the Father, bless these rings ✠ ✠ ✠ and the two who exchange them. Fill them with your Holy Presence. Keep them safe in the circle of Your protection and love.

N., place the ring on **N.’s** finger and repeat after me:

A) “With this ring, I pledge my love and faithfulness to you, today, tomorrow and always.”

Or,

B) "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine."

Or,

C) “As this ring has no end, neither shall my love for you.”

Or,

D) The couple place the rings on the fingers of one another, first the one, then the other, saying:

N., receive this ring as a symbol of my abiding love.

Or,

E) With this ring, I pledge my love and faithfulness to you. In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Or,

F) **N.**, take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Or,

G) This ring I give you, as a sign of our constant faith and abiding love, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Common Ending:

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.

2. (Option 2)

Priest: And so, **N. and N.**, we come 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.

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

May God Bless these rings ✕ ✕ ✕ and **N. and N.**, who give them and who will wear them; may they ever abide in unity, love, and happiness for the rest of their lives.

Priest says to the Groom

Will you, **Groom’s N.** accept this ring as a loving symbol of **Bride’s** vows this day?

Groom: **I will**

Priest says to the Bride

Will you, **Bride’s N.**, accept this ring as a loving symbol of **the Groom’s** vows on this day?

Bride: **I will**

P: *Then, **Groom’s N.**, please place the ring on **Bride’s N.** left hand and repeat after me,*

Groom: **Bride’s N.**, I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and faithfulness to you.

*By the same token **Bride’s N.**, you may place the ring on **Groom’s N.** finger and repeat after me,*

Bride: **Groom’s N.**, I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and faithfulness to you.

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.

3. **(Option 3)** Questions/Ring Ceremony (Combined Version)

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

Do you have your rings? (They respond, “Yes”)

The circle has long been a symbol of God. Without beginning or end and with no point of weakness, the circle is a reminder of the eternal quality of God and of unending strength. Let the seamless circle of these rings become the symbol of your endless love. Your wedding rings are most special because they say that even in your uniqueness you have chosen to be bonded, to allow the presence of another human being to enhance who you are. Your rings carry a potent double message: We are individuals and yet we belong; we are not alone. As you wear them through time, they will reflect not only who you are but also the glorious union that you are now creating.

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

Heavenly Father, bless these rings ✠ ✠ ✠ and the two who exchange them. Fill them with Your Holy Presence. Keep them safe in the circle of Your protection and Love.

N., as you place this ring on **N.**, I now ask you: Do you take this woman to be your lawful wedded wife? Do you promise God, **N.**, and all of us here that from this point forward, your arms may be her shelter and your heart may be her guide? Do you promise to support her and nourish her, to love, respect and honor her for the rest of your days on earth?

Response: “I do.”

N., as you place this ring on **N.**, I now ask you: Do you take this man to be your lawful wedded husband? Do you promise God, **N.**, and all of us here that from this point forward, your arms may be his shelter and your heart may be his guide? Do you promise to support him and nourish him, to love, respect and honor him for the rest of your days on earth?

Response: “I do.”

4. **(Option 4)** Catholic Ring Blessing (Replaces standard blessing above in Ring Ceremony Options; may be used by other denominations.)

- a. Heavenly Father, bless these rings in the Name of God the Father, ✠ ✠ ✠ God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit and grant that they who wear them may do so with a deep abiding faith in their love for each other. May they both do Your will and always live together in Peace, Love abiding Joy. We ask this through Christ Our lord. Amen.

Or,

- b. 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 they who wear them may do so in abiding Peace, Love, and Good Will forever

more. *Amen.*

Or,

- c. Lord, bless ☩ ☩ ☩ and consecrate **N. and N.** in their love for each other. May these rings be a symbol of true faith in each other, and always remind them of their love. Through Christ our Lord.

Or,

- d. May the Lord bless ☩ ☩ ☩ these rings, which you give to each other as the sign of your love and fidelity.

Or,

- e. By Your blessing, O God, ☩ ☩ ☩ may these rings be to **N. and N.** symbols of unending love and faithfulness, reminding them of the covenant they have made this day, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ring Warming Ceremony (Optional)

As you have blessed this marriage with your words, **N. and N.** now ask that you also bless their rings with your prayers. As the ceremony proceeds, the families of **N. and N.** will warm their rings by passing them down the row. As you hold them in your hands, pause for a moment, and make your wishes and prayers for the couple and for their future together before you pass them on to the next person. These rings will not only be a gift from one to another but will be given with the love, support and wisdom of their family and friends.

(Both rings to be passed down the family rows)

❖ PRIEST BLESSINGS: (Mandatory for all Weddings where Priest is Celebrant)

1. (Option 1)

N. and N., you now have the opportunity for expressing through your union and partnership, God's glory, love, and healing. How could this be? Through devotion and service to each other. Through patience, kindness, total acceptance of each other, tempered by the willingness to change. You will be tempted, as time goes by, to take for granted the love which today seems so precious and dear, to speak to and treat each other in ways that do not reflect the highest good in both of you. Resist it. Promise to always see the goodness in your partner, even when it's especially difficult. God will provide you the way if you are willing. He is the key to your success as a married couple. Call on Him devotedly and consistently to guide your thinking and bless your home. May this marriage be to you a heavenly sanctuary. God bless you.

2. (Option 2)

Go forth in power, full of the Spirit of God. Let your love be genuine, hold fast to what is good, rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, and persevere in prayer. May God the Father, ☩ ☩ ☩ God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit bless and keep you always. *Amen.*

3. (Option 3)

O Heavenly Father, we ask You to bless and consecrate this couple in their love for each other. May the rings that they have exchanged be a reminder of the love and faithfulness they have pledged to one another. *Amen.*

4. (Option 4)

Let us pray. Most gracious God, we praise You for the tender mercy and unfailing care revealed to us in Jesus the Christ and for the great joy and comfort bestowed upon us in the gift of human love. We give You thanks for **N. and N.**, and the covenant of faithfulness they have made. Pour out the abundance of Your Holy Spirit upon them. Keep them in Your steadfast love; protect them from all danger; fill them with Your wisdom and peace; lead them in holy service to each other and the world.

5. (Option 5) An Irish Blessing

You are the star of each night,
you are the brightness of every morning, you are the story of each guest,
you are the report of every land.

No evil shall befall you, on hill nor bank, in field or valley, on mountain or in glen, neither above, nor below, neither in sea, nor on shore, in skies above,
nor in the depths.

You are the kernel of my heart, you are the face of my sun, you are the harp of my music,
you are the crown of my company.

6. (Option 6) Apache Marriage Blessing

Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will be the shelter for each other. Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be the warmth for the other. Now you are two persons, but there is only one life before. Go now to your dwelling place to enter into the days of your life together. And may your days be good and long upon the earth.

Treat yourselves and each other with respect and remind yourselves often of what brought you together. 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 one time or another - remember to focus on what is right between you, not only the part which seems wrong. In this way, you can ride out the storms when clouds hide the face of the sun in your lives - remembering that even if you lose sight of it for a moment, the sun is still there. And if each of you takes responsibility for the quality of your life together, it will be marked by abundance and delight.

7. (Option 7) (Good Years' Blessing)

N. and N., 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'.

8. (Option 8) (Traditional Catholic Wedding Blessing)

Dear brothers and sisters, let us humbly pray to the Lord that on these His servants, now married in Christ, He may mercifully pour out the blessing of His grace and make of one heart in love (*At Mass: by the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood*) those He has joined by a holy covenant.

And all pray in silence for a while. Then the Priest, with hands extended over the bride and bridegroom, continues:

(A)

O God, Who by Your mighty power created all things out of nothing, and, when You had set in place the beginnings of the universe, formed man and woman in Your own image, making the woman an inseparable helpmate to the man, that they might no longer be two, but one flesh, and taught that what You were pleased to make one must never be divided and Who consecrated the bond of Marriage by so great a mystery that in the wedding covenant You foreshadowed the Sacrament of Christ and His Church;

Look now with favor on **N. and N.**, joined together in Marriage, who ask to be strengthened by Your blessing. Send down on them the grace of the Holy Spirit and pour Your Love into their hearts, that they may remain faithful in the Marriage covenant.

Lord, we pray to You: may **N. and N.** hold fast to the faith and keep Your commandments; made one in the flesh, may they be blameless in all they do; and with the strength that comes from the Gospel, may they bear true witness to Christ before all, Through Christ our Lord.

Response: Amen.

Or,

(B)

Holy Father, Who formed man in Your Own image, male and female You created them, so that as husband and wife, united in body and heart, they might fulfill their calling in the world. Graciously stretch out Your right hand over these Your servants **N. and N.**, we pray, and pour into their hearts the power of the Holy Spirit.

Grant, O Lord, that, as they enter upon this sacramental union, they may share with one another the gifts of Your Love and, by being for each other a sign of Your presence, become one heart and one mind.

We pray this, through Christ our Lord.

Response: Amen.

Or,

Graciously crown with Your blessings Your daughter **N.**, so that, by being a good wife (and mother), she may bring warmth to her home with a love that is pure and adorn it with welcoming graciousness. Bestow a heavenly blessing also, O Lord, on **N.**, Your servant, that he may be a worthy, good, and faithful husband (and/or a provident father).

Grant, Holy Father, that, desiring to approach Your table as a couple joined in Marriage in Your presence, they may one day have the joy of taking part in Your great banquet in heaven. *Through Christ our Lord.*

Response: Amen.

9. (Option 9) (Traditional Blessing)

The grace of Christ attends you; the love of God surrounds you; the Holy Spirit keep you, that you may live in faith, abound in hope, and grow in love, both now and forevermore. *Amen.*

10. (Option10) (Traditional Blessing)

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord be kind and gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. *Amen.*

❖ PRONOUNCEMENTS

1. (Option 1)

N. and N., 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 legal right as a minister legally authorized to do so, and my greatest joy and privilege as a priest in Christ's One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, to declare you husband and wife.

N., you may now kiss the bride. (or "As kisses are messengers of love, please kiss now and let soul meet soul on each other's lips.")

2. (Option 2)

Forasmuch as you, **N.**, and you, **N.**, have openly declared your wishes to be united in marriage, and in the presence of these witnesses have pledged love to each other, and have confirmed the same by joining hands, exchanging rings, and declaring your vows, I, as a priest in Christ's One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and as a minister legally authorized to do so, to declare you husband and wife.

N., you may now kiss the bride.

(or "As kisses are messengers of love, please kiss now and let soul meet soul on each other's lips.")

3. (Option 3)

Before God and in the presence of this assembly, **N., and N.**, have made their solemn vows to each other. They have confirmed their promises by the joining of hands and by the giving and receiving of rings. Therefore, I proclaim that they are now husband and wife. Blessed be the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit now and forever.

N., you may now kiss the bride.

4. (Option 4)

Inasmuch as **N. and N.**, have exchanged vows of love and fidelity in the presence of God and the Church, I now pronounce that they are bound to one another as husbands/wives/spouses/spouses for life in a holy covenant, as long as they both shall live. Amen.

N., you may now kiss the bride.

(Option 5) Pronouncement Ending (may be added to all versions)

The priest says (and the congregation may join)

Those whom God has joined together let no one separate!

❖ PRAYERS: (directed towards the couple)

1. (Option 1)

Let us Pray: Dear God, thank You for this joyous day. Thank You for Your Light that has entered **N. and N.'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.*

2. (Option 2)

Let us Pray: Father of mankind, Whose nature is love, look with favor upon this woman and this man who desire to make their vows before You. We are grateful for the providence that has led to this union. Grant this to be more than an outward union, but also the blending of hearts and spirits and purposes. Bless each with the inward qualities of integrity, trust, cooperation, and forgiveness that they may live together in love and peace. *Amen.*

3. (Option 3) adapted from *Illuminata* by Marianne Williamson

Let us Pray: Dear God, please make of this relationship a great and holy adventure. May their joining be a sacred space. May the two of them find rest here, a haven for their souls. Remove from them any

temptation to judge themselves or each other or to direct each other. May they surrender to You their conflicts and their burdens. We know You are their Answer and their rock. Help them not forget. Bring them together in heart and mind as well as body and guide them in the ways of holiness. May this relationship be a burst of light. May it be a fount of love and wisdom for them, for their family, for their community, and for their world. May this bond be a channel for Your love and healing, a vehicle of Your grace and power. As lessons come and challenges grow, let them not be tempted to forsake each other. Let them always remember that in each other they have the most beautiful woman, the most beautiful man, the strongest one, the sacred one in whose arms we are repaired. May they remain young in this relationship. May they grow wise in this relationship. Bring them what You desire for them. And show them how You would have them be. Thank You, dear God. *Amen.*

4. (Option 4) (The Lords' Prayer)

Our Father Who art in Heaven, hallow be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. (For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.) *Amen.*

5. (Option 5) The Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace. Our Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,

now

and at the hour of our death.

Amen.

6. (Option 6)

Let us pray: Gracious God, spirit of life and love, we ask all blessings upon **N. and N.** in their life together. May they be blessed with patience, to see them through times of tensions or conflict. May they be blessed with kindness, to enable them to nurture and care for one another in times of pain or sorrow. May they be blessed with a spirit of playfulness and joyfulness that they may participate fully in the beauties and pleasures of creation. May they be blessed, finally, with a knowledge of the ever-flowing presence of love in the world, that they may be channels of this love to one another and to all whom they meet in their life's journey. *Amen.*

7. (Option 7) (Navajo Prayer)

When you were children, you talked like children, but now that you've grown, you should be done with childish things and put them away. When you were children, you looked into a mirror that gave only a blurred reflection of reality. But with love and maturity, you shouldn't be afraid to look into that mirror and see each other face to face. Be swift like the wind in loving each other. Be brave like the sea in

loving each other. Be gentle like the breeze in loving each other. Be patient like the sun who waits and watches the four changes of the earth in loving each other. Be wise like the roaring of the thunder clouds and lightning in loving each other. Be shining like the morning dawn in loving each other. Be proud like the tree who stands without bending in loving each other. Be brilliant like the rainbow colors in loving each other. Now, forever, forever, there will be no more loneliness because your worlds are joined together with the world. Forever, forever. *Amen.*

8. (Option 8) (Time Travelers Prayer, “Compass of Your Heart”)

May you take on the world together with all your hopes and dreams. May you be each other’s anchor in smooth and rocky seas. May you bend to the world’s winds and brave stalls and storms. May you find common ground in all its changing forms. May you cross stubborn boundaries and turn many a stone. May you find haven for your souls; may you have heart and home. And if some days are gray, and some nights are long and cold, may you be each other’s sun and moon, as your destinies unfold. And should you lose sight of each other, and start to drift apart, may you circle back by following, the compass of your heart.

❖ **BENEDICTIONS: (includes both couple and congregation) (Can be moved before the Pronouncement)**

1. (Option 1)

May God’s blessings rest upon you, may God’s peace abide with you, and may God’s presence illuminate your hearts, now and forevermore. *Amen.*

2. (Option 2)

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

3. (Option 3)

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. May the Lord lift up His Countenance upon you and give you peace. *Amen.*

4. (Option 4)

The two of you are now joined in one unbroken circle. Wherever you go, may you always return to one another in your togetherness. May you two find in each other the love for which all men and women long. May you grow in understanding and in compassion. May the home that you establish be such a place of sanctuary that all who visit will find a friend there. And may the Lord bless you and keep you forevermore. *Amen.*

5. (Option 5) (The Irish Wedding Blessing)

May the road rise to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sunshine warm upon your face, the rains fall soft upon the fields.

May the light of friendship guide your paths together. May the laughter of children grace the halls of your home.

May the joy of living for one another trip a smile from your lips, a twinkle from your eye. And when eternity beckons, at the end of a life heaped high with love,

May the good Lord embrace you with the arms that have nurtured you the whole length of your joy-filled days.

6. (Option 6)

And now, **N. and N.**, may the Lord God **X X X** bless you and keep you forevermore, may God be with you and bless you, may you see your children's children, may you be poor in misfortune, Rich in blessings, may you know nothing but happiness.

From this day forward, May the road rise to meet you May the wind be always at your back. May the warm rays of sun fall upon your home And may the hand of a friend always be near. May green be the grass you walk on. May blue be the skies above you. May pure be the joys that surround you. May true be the hearts that love you.

7. (Option 7)

Most gracious God, we give You thanks for Your tender love in sending Jesus Christ to come among us, to be born of a human mother, and to make the way of the cross to be the way of life. We thank you, also, for consecrating the union of man and woman in His Name. By the power of Your Holy Spirit, pour out the abundance of Your blessing upon **N. and N.**

Defend them from every enemy. Lead them into all peace. Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts, a mantle about their shoulders, and a crown upon their foreheads. Bless them in their work and in their companionship; in their sleeping and in their waking; in their joys and in their sorrows; in their life and in their death. Finally, in Your mercy, bring them to that table where Your saints feast for ever in Your heavenly home; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who with You and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, One God, forever and ever. Amen.

8. (Option 8)

May God bless you, hold and keep you; May God's mercy shine on you...guide your work and guard your resting, keep your love forever new. Amen.

9. (Option 9)

O God, Who not only honored a wedding feast by Thy holy presence, but did begin there Thy work of miracles, be pleased to bless at this the opening of their married life, these Your holy servants, **N., and N.** Grant to them the harmony of love and lasting charity, the beauty of restraint, a humble respect for each other. Grant them also the discipline of behavior that is pleasing to Thee. And, in all things, let them have the dignity of a sincere and strong faith. May the angel of God be their unfailing protection. May their days be many and peaceful. Their children be their joy, that both on earth and in Heaven, they may be crowned by God. *Amen.*

10. (Option 10)

Eternal God, without Your grace no promise is sure. Strengthen this loving couple with the gift of Thy Holy Spirit, so they may fulfill the vows they have made today. Keep them faithful to one another and fill them with such love and joy that they may build a home where no one is ever a stranger. Guide them by Your Word to serve You all the days of their lives, through Jesus Christ Our Lord Who honor and glories, be forever and ever. Amen.

11. (Option 11) (A Scottish Wedding Prayer)

Lord help us to remember when we first met and the strong love that grew between us.
 ... to work that love into practical things so that nothing can divide us.
 We ask for words both kind with loving hearts always ready to ask forgiveness as well as to forgive.
 Dear Lord, we put our marriage into Your hands.

12. (Option 12) (An Irish Wedding Blessing)

Happy is the bride that rain falls on. May your mornings bring joy and your evenings bring peace. May your troubles grow few as your blessings increase. May the saddest day of your future be no worse than the happiest day of your past. May your hands be forever clasped in friendship And your hearts joined forever in love.

Your lives are very special, God has touched you in many ways. May His blessings rest upon you and fill all your coming days. We swear by peace and love to stand, heart to heart and hand to hand. Hark, O Spirit, and hear us now, Confirming this our Sacred Vow. And now may God be with you and bless you. May you see your children's children. May you be poor in misfortune, rich in blessings. May you know nothing but happiness from this day forward.

❖ ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. (Option 1)

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my highest honor and privilege to present to all of you for the very first time, **Mr. and Mrs. John (use of middle name optional) Smith!**

2. (Option 2)

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

3. (Option 3)

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

4. (Option 4)

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my highest honor and privilege, to present to all of you, for the very first time publicly, The Family of **N. and N. Smith!**

5. (Option 5) (Introduction as a Family)

It is my pleasure to present to you **N. and N.** in their new relationship as husband and wife, and their son/daughter/children, **N.**

6. (Option 6) (using Wedding Bells)

N. and N. have chosen bells to symbolize their marriage today! Wedding bells have long been used as a symbol of marriage all over the world, but the tradition can be traced to Celtic origins, where the bells were used to ward off evil spirits that might inflict harm on the happy couple during their wedding day. In Scotland, the bells were also used to announce to the local people that a wedding had taken place, and they were rung as the couple left the church. And in Ireland, wedding bells still play a big part in wedding traditions, as newly married couples are always given a marriage bell as a wedding gift, and this must be placed in a prominent position within their home. The marriage bell can be used throughout married life to bring an end to an argument without either partner having to admit that they are wrong.

Today, the parents and grandparents of our happy couple have bells to celebrate the happy occasion, and as they begin to ring theirs, they ask that you then join them as the couple walks down the aisle as a newly married couple. And, so, it is my great pleasure...

❖ Recessional

The End (Note...more truthfully, the Beginning!)

A FEW ADDITIONAL OPTIONS:

❖ Candle Lighting Ceremony (Optional)

1. (Option 1) (Candle Lighting Ceremony– long version)

(Note: This ceremony can be done with 4 candles, as its written here, or can be modified to use the Unity Candle, which has 3 candles. Kindly bring candles and candleholders)

Within each human being burns the spark of the Divine. When two people love one another with devotion and freedom, they kindle the awareness of that spark in each other as nothing else quite can do. The lighted candle is symbolic of the cosmic creation and the light and truth in the human heart, mind, and soul. Fire also symbolizes both purity and passion. For many, the flame means the security of home and family, the warmth of the hearth.

Take into your beings the warmth, radiance and light that the divine flame represents. Let it light your way on the journey of life that you are about to embark on.

In committing to one another today, in the spirit of being born new to one another, you kindle each other's divine light and promise always to see that light in one another-to nurture and tend that divine flame in your partner as best you can each day-especially at the times it may be hardest to see, and the times your partner may doubt or forget the existence of that light within him-or herself.

Bride's N., take this candle now and symbolically enter the sacred trust to honor the divine spark in **Groom's N.** by lighting it from this candle representing the Divine Source. *(She lights candle)*

Groom's N. take this candle now and symbolically enter the sacred trust to honor the divine spark in **Bride's N.**, by lighting it from this candle representing the Divine Source. *(He lights candle)*

If at this time you wish to affirm your free choice to unite as partners in marriage, please light the unlit candle together now. *(They light unlit candle together)* As you bring your individual flames together to symbolically form the new and greater flame of your marriage, never forget that the light of your union is made up of your unique, individual expressions of light and is continually sustained and renewed by your connection to the Divine Spark, the eternal light of God.

2. (Option 2) – (simple version, a)

N. and N. have chosen candles to represent their love and commitment today. The candles together symbolize their marriage, and willingness to surrender to something greater than themselves. May the light of their marriage be a beacon in the night, a safe harbor from the storms of life. May their future be made infinitely brighter by the light and the love that you share.

3. (Option 3) – (simple version, b)

N. and N. have chosen candles to represent their love and commitment today. The Unity Candle is both a symbol of the union of two separate lives into one and a sign of God's light and presence. I encourage you to light this candle on each anniversary remembering this day, of the promises made and God's promise to dispel the darkness and be present with you in your marriage always.

4. (Option 3) (by the Mothers)

Intro: After everyone else is seated, and before the Bride enters, the music changes and both mothers enter together. They approach the table with the candles and light each of the single tapers. They then take their seats, the bride enters, and the Invocation begins.

Candle Lighting Ceremony:

N. and N. have chosen candles to represent their love and commitment today. The Unity Candle is both a symbol of the union of two separate lives into one and a sign of God's light and presence.

The individual candles, lit at the beginning of our ceremony today by your respective mothers, is a sign of your lives and family; lives that will now be combined *into one*.

I encourage you to light a candle on each anniversary remembering this day, of the promises made and God's promise to dispel the darkness and be present with you in your marriage always.

❖ The Hands Ceremony (Optional)

N. and N., Please face each other and take each other's hands, so that you may see the gift that they are to you.

These are the hands of your best friend, young and strong and full of love for you, that are holding yours on your wedding day as you promise to love each other today, tomorrow, and forever.

These are the hands that will work alongside yours as together you build your future and that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, and with the slightest touch will comfort you like no other.

These are the hands that will hold you when fear or grief temporarily comes your way and that will countless times wipe the tears from your eyes, tears of sorrow and tears of joy.

These are the hands that will tenderly hold your children and give you support and encouragement to chase down your dreams.

These are the hands that will hold you tight as you struggle through difficult times and give you strength when you need it most.

These are the hands that will lift your chin and brush your cheek as they raise your face to look into eyes

that are filled with overwhelming love for you.

And lastly, these are the hands that even when wrinkled and aged will still be reaching for yours, still giving you the same unspoken tenderness with just a touch.

Together as a team, everything you wish for can be realized. God, bless these hands that you see before you this day. May they always be held by one another.

❖ The Hand Fasting/Binding (Optional – Traditional Version)

N. and N. have chosen a traditional hand fasting ceremony. In Europe, until the mid-1700's, few unions were sanctified in the Church or a synagogue. Rather, they were celebrated by a simple hand fasting ceremony in which the two partners joined hands over the village anvil, in the fields or in the groves of trees. Today, we build upon this tradition as **N. and N.** link their hands to form an infinity circle, symbolizing the entirety of the universe as represented in their relationship.

In the earliest of days, the hands of the bride and groom would be bound with whatever was available - vines, colorful cords, or scarf. Today we will use a simple ribbon (Note: *this can be a cord and also the Priest's stole, if selected*) to symbolize the binding, or promises.

N. and N., please join hands in the form of an infinity circle.

Please know now before you go further, that since your lives have crossed in this life you have formed ties between each other. As you seek to enter this state of holy matrimony you should strive to make real the ideals, which give meaning to both this ceremony and the institution of marriage.

With full awareness, know that within this circle you are not only declaring your intent to be hand fasted before your friends and family, but you speak that intent also to God. The promises made today and the ties that are bound here greatly strengthen your union; they will cross the years and lives of each soul's growth.

Priest: Do you still seek to enter this ceremony?

Couple: We do!

The First promise (binding)

Groom, will you be **Bride's** faithful partner for life?

R:/ I will

Bride, will you be **the Groom's** faithful partner for life?

R:/ I will

To Both

Priest: Will you be each other's constant friends and one true love?

R:/ We will

Priest: And so, the binding is made.

**The cord is wrapped around the couple's wrist. **

The Second Promise (binding)

Priest: **Bride**, do you promise to love **Groom** without reservation?

R:/ I do.

Priest: **Groom**, do you promise to love **Bride** without reservation?

R:/ I do.

To Both

Priest: Will both of you stand by one another in sickness and in health, in plenty and in want?

R:/ We will

Priest: And so, the binding is made.

**The cord is wrapped around the couple's wrist. **

The Third Promise (binding)

Priest: **Bride**, will you stand together with **Groom** your times of joy and sorrow?

R:/ I will

Priest: **Groom**, will you stand together with **Bride** your times of joy and sorrow?

R:/ I will

To Both

Priest: Will you share the burdens of each so that your spirits may grow in this union?

R:/ We will

Priest: And so, the binding is made.

*The cord is wrapped around the couple's wrist. *

The Forth Promise (binding)

Priest: **Groom**, will you always to be open and honest with **Bride**, for as long as you both shall live?

R:/ I will

Priest: **Bride**, will you always to be open and honest with **Groom**, for as long as you both shall live?

R:/ I will

To Both

Priest: Will you dream together to create new realities and hopes for this marriage?

R:/ We will.

Priest: And so, the binding is made.

*The cord is wrapped around the couple's wrist. *

The Fifth Promise (binding)

Priest: **Bride**, Will you honor this man?

R:/ I will

Priest: **Groom**, Will you honor this woman?

R:/ I will

To Both

Priest: Will you both seek to cherish and strengthen that honor?

R:/ We will

Priest: And so, the binding is made.

*The cord is wrapped around the couple's wrist. *

Binding of all promises

*Remove cord while saying: *

Priest: The knots of this binding are not formed by these chords, but instead by your vows. Either of you may drop the chords, for as always, you hold in your own hands the making or breaking of this union.

Once chord is removed, it is placed on altar or handed to a member of the immediate family

❖ The Hand Fasting (Optional – Simple Version with Priest's Stole)

N. and N. have chosen a traditional hand fasting ceremony. In Europe, until the mid-1700's, few unions were sanctified in the Church or a synagogue. Rather, they were celebrated by a simple hand fasting ceremony in which the two partners joined hands over the village anvil, in the fields or in the groves of trees. Today, we build upon this tradition as **XX** and **XY** link their hands to form an infinity circle, symbolizing the entirety of the universe as represented in their relationship.

In the earliest of days, the hands of the bride and groom would be bound with whatever was available - vines, colorful cords, or scarf. Today we will use a simple ribbon (Note: *this can be a cord or the Priest's stole, if selected*) to symbolize the binding, or promises.

N. and N., please join hands in the form of an infinity circle.

Please know now before you go further, that since your lives have crossed in this life you have formed ties between each other. As you seek to enter this state of holy matrimony you should strive to make real, the ideals, which give meaning to both this ceremony and the institution of marriage.

With full awareness, know that within this circle you are not only declaring your intent to be hand fasted before your friends and family, but you speak that intent also to God. The promises made today and the ties that are bound here greatly strengthen your union; they will cross the years and lives of each soul's growth.

Priest: Do you still seek to enter this ceremony?

Couple: We do!

*** The hands of the couple are bound by the priest with hi stole, a symbol of his office and willingness to serve others. This will become the thread to which the couple will now pledge themselves to one another***

Priest: Will you be each other's constant friends and one true love? Will both of you stand by one another in sickness and in health, in plenty and in want? Will you share the burdens of each so that your spirits may grow in this union? Will you dream together to create new realities and hopes for this marriage? Will you both seek to cherish and strengthen that honor?

R:/ We will

The Stole is removed and returned to the shoulders of the Priest, and he then blesses the Hands of the couple

Priest: God bless ☩ ☩ ☩ these hands that we see before this day, may they always be held by the other and ever abide in unity, love, and happiness for the rest of their lives.

R:/ Amen.