

WEDDING PRAYER

O God, Creator and Sustainer of all life and love in heaven and on earth, we ask for your blessings upon this new marriage and upon the vows of marriage that _____ and _____ have taken here. Make this day and this passage fruitful to them through an added devotion, through a new inner strength, and through a new sense of the sacredness of life. We do not ask that they be kept from all sorrow and trial, but that they may learn from these and become stronger because of them. We do not ask that all life be easy and profitable to them, but that they find life good and worth celebrating. Make them always quick to forgive, quick to laugh, quick to enjoy. And especially, O God, grant them the grace to discover the tremendous delight and joy present in the small things. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (optional)

Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed 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.

PRONOUNCEMENT

Forasmuch as you _____ and you _____ have consented together in marriage, and have pledged your love and your commitment each to the other in the presence of God and of this company, I do now pronounce you husband and wife.

BENEDICTION

Now you will feel no rain,
For each of you will be shelter to the other.
Now you will feel no cold,
for each of you will be warmth to the other.
Now you will feel no loneliness,
for each of you will be companionship to the other.
Now you are two persons, but there is one life between you.
So 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.
(From the Apache tribal tradition)

THE NEW WEDDING CEREMONY

[To the couple] Dear _____ and _____, today you are surrounded by your friends and family, all of whom are gathered to witness your marriage and to share in the joy of this occasion.

Life takes on meaning as it becomes composed of many meaningful events, some of which can be specified and planned for. One of these events is marriage.

As you know, no minister, no priest, no rabbi, no public official can marry you. Only you can marry yourselves. By a mutual commitment to love each other, to work toward creating an atmosphere of care and consideration and respect, by a willingness to face the tensions and anxieties that underlie human life, you can make your wedded life come alive.

On this the day that begins your marriage, you stand somewhat apart from the rest of humanity. You stand within the charmed circle of your love.

Love is not meant to be and cannot be the possession of one person alone. True love serves as a source of common energy, as a fount from which you both draw sustenance to live your lives with creative courage. From this day onward you must come closer together than ever before; you must love one another in sickness and in health, for better and for worse. At the same time, let your love give you the strength to stand apart so that you may each seek out your unique destinies and make your special contributions to the world. The poet Rilke once said that marriage is not a matter of making a quick community of spirit by tearing down and destroying all boundaries. But rather a good marriage is that in which each appoints the other as a guardian of their solitude... Once the realization is accepted that even between the closest people, infinite distances exist, a marvelous living side-by-side can grow up for them if they succeed in loving the expanse between them, which gives them the possibility of always seeing each other as a whole and before an immense sky.

Today, as you join yourselves in marriage, there is a vast and unknown future stretching out before you. The possibilities and potentials of your married life are great; and now falls upon your shoulders the task of choosing values and making real your dreams.

I should like at this time to try to speak of some of the things which many of us here wish for you. First of all, we wish for you a love that makes both of you better people, a love that continues to give you joy and zest for living, that provides you with energy to face the responsibilities of life.

We wish for you a home—not just a place of stone and wood, but an island of sanity and serenity in a frenzied world. We hope that this home is not only a place of private joy and retreat, but also serves as a temple wherein the values of your life are generated and upheld. We hope that your home will encompass the beauty of nature—that it will have within it the elements of simplicity, exuberance, silence, color, and a concordance with the rhythms of life. We wish for you a home with books and poetry, music and spirituality—a home with all the things that represent the highest strivings of men and women.

[Optional: If you choose to have children, we wish for you children who will not be mere reflections of yourselves but who will learn from you your best traits and who will go forth to re-create the values you shall have instilled in them. We hope you will pass on to your children the concept of family—not as an obligation, but as a transcendent force which brings people close in times of joy and in times of need.]

Finally, we wish that at the end of your lives you will be able to say these two things to each other: Because you have loved me, you have given me faith in myself. And because I have seen the good in you, I have received from you a faith in humanity.

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

_____, in light of this vision of life together, do you wish to take _____ as your wife, that you may live together in the holy bond of marriage? (Answer: I do.)

_____, in light of this vision of life together, do you wish to take _____ as your husband, that you may live together in the holy bond of marriage? (Answer: I do).

THE PRESENTATION (optional)

Who presents _____ to be married to _____? Who presents _____ to be married to _____? Congregational Support (optional): Will each one of you here today do all that is in your power to support and encourage _____ and _____ in fulfilling the promises they make here today—if so, please respond by saying, “We will.”

EXCHANGE OF VOWS

The vows through which you will accept each other as husband and wife have no hidden power within them. Only to the extent that they express in words your continuing intention and commitment do they have meaning. And in a world where the pressures pushing people apart sometimes feel stronger than those drawing people together, your commitment to one another will need to be creatively re-expressed in many different ways in the coming days and years. The expression in today’s vows is an important and visible milestone in your journey together.

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife from this time onward, to join with you and to share all that is to come, to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond, and in all of our life together to be loyal to you with all my being.

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my husband from this time onward, to join with you and to share all that is to come, to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond, and in all of our life together to be loyal to you with all my being.

(or Traditional Vows)

I, _____ take you, _____, to be my wedded wife: to have and to hold from this day forward; for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health; to love and to cherish; so long as we live; and thereto I pledge you my faith.

I, _____ take you, _____, to be my wedded husband: to have and to hold from this day forward; for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health; to love and to cherish; so long as we live; and thereto I pledge you my faith.

EXCHANGE OF RINGS

Ring Blessing: Dear God, we ask your blessing upon these rings that they may be constant symbols for _____ and _____ of unending love and devotion.

Or Ring Rubric: _____ and _____, your rings, being circles, are symbolic of eternity; and being made of precious metal, are symbolic of pure love, which has already united your hearts.

(Repeating) In giving you this ring, I join my life with yours, and pledge my everlasting love.

(or) With this ring, I thee wed; and pledge my faithful love.

LIGHTING OF THE MARRIAGE CANDLE (optional)