

Interfaith Ceremony 1

Silent Pastoral Prayer

Almighty God, cleanse my heart and my lips that I may be worthy to bless and proclaim this Holy Sacrament for these thy servants.

THE CONVOCATION

Dearly Beloved, friends, relatives, and honored guests; It is out of our affection for this Bride and Groom that we have gathered together to witness and bless their mutual vows which will unite them in Holy Matrimony. To this moment they bring their open hearts, willing spirits, the dreams which bind them together, and their own personalities and spirit. We are here to thank God for bestowing upon them life's greatest gift; another person to share with, care for, grow with, change with, be joyful with and to stand firm as one when trials and tribulations enter their lives.

To you who are present as friends and families... this is your service as well and you are here to bestow your blessings and love upon this couple as they seek to unite as one with the Holy Spirit. By your thoughts, your feelings and your deeds toward them, on this day and in the days to come, you can help strengthen the vows they are here to make.

OPENING PRAYER

Eternal God of Peace and Light, Father of Christ our Lord, we give thanks for the great gift of love that you have bestowed upon these thy servants. We give you thanks for _____ and _____ for their open hearts and willing spirits, and for the example of love that they share with us today. Be with them on this joyous occasion as they share their love and say their vows; and be with us their witnesses that we may support them always and be blessed by what is said and seen here today. May the home they are creating today truly be a place of love, harmony and thanksgiving, where your Spirit is always present. We ask these things in the name of Christ our Lord. Amen

THE INVOCATION

Love is the centerpiece to a long and healthy marriage. It is to be shared between you, not kept apart. While love is difficult to explain or describe, each of us recognizes it as the ingredient of life that motivates and leads us to goals above and beyond our individual ambitions. The following reading by Saint Paul attempts to capture the essence of love.

"1st CORINTHIANS 13: 1-13"

If I speak in the tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I am nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we

know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. Now these three remain; faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.

MARRIAGE AS A SACRAMENT

The holiness given by Christ to marriage is seen very clearly from the fact that the union of the baptized is a sacrament. This means that marriage itself is a sacred sign through which Christ gives us his Holy Spirit. What does this consist of? It is the simplest imaginable: the mutual promise and life in accordance with this promise. This is the sacrament. Hence the form of the sacrament is of no particular formula taken in and of itself, nor a marriage ceremony by itself, but the will to belong to each other in love and freely chosen loyalty, till the day of death. Hence all the love, tenderness, compassion, concern and caring that married people offer each other is a source of Grace, of Christ's presence, of the Holy Spirit. This is the nature of marriage, which Christians enter into before God. This is the nature of the ceremony you are present to witness and to partake of.

"PSALM 1"

- 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!

HOMILY

Pastor: Matrimony symbolizes the ultimate intimacy and commitment between a man and a woman: yet this closeness should not diminish but strengthen the individuality of each partner. We are gathered here to celebrate a marriage, which is a spiritual union between two people. Your friends and family have all come to share their love and to bless you in your new union and the creation of a brand new family. As you enter into this union together it is important to reflect upon what has brought you to this point in your lives. A desire to elevate your relationship above just the ordinary and to transcend your own limitations as you build a life and a home that is filled with love, peace, happiness and joy with your spiritual mate.

Base your relationship on friendship, because when we are truly friends with someone we want to spend quality time with them. We care when they are sick, sad or in despair. We listen to their hopes, fears, and dreams as we seek a deeper understanding of their spirit. We show them sympathy when things go

wrong. We share laughter and lighthearted moments together. We go out of our way to communicate with them so that we are “on the same page”, because being so is the only true way to experience happiness, unconditional love and joy in life. To achieve true friendship takes commitment, communication, and hard work, and through this process you will achieve peace in mind, body, and spirit.

Seek God’s love and blessings, praying together often. Love is God’s greatest gift to us and should not be taken for granted. Love is believing, sharing, caring and dreaming. Love is honesty, friendship, companionship and selflessness. Love is the desire to be intimate physically, psychologically, and emotionally. Love is devotion, celebration, understanding, forgiveness and sacrifice. Love is strong, yet can be fragile. Love is inspiration, support and the only true way to know God. John tells us that “Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.” God’s love is called agape love and the Apostle Paul describes this kind of true love in 1st Corinthians. This is the kind of love that God want’s between husband and wife.

BESTOWING OF THE BRIDE

Pastor: Who present in this community bestows this woman to be united with this man in Holy Matrimony? Parent or respondent stands and replies “I Do!”

Pastor: Please face one another and join hands. Matron of Honor takes bouquet.

EXPRESSION OF INTENT

Do you promise to love and cherish each other; do you promise to comfort each other, during sorrow and during joy? “We Do”

Do you promise to support and to tenderly care for each other; to trust and to encourage each other’s own fulfillment? “We Do”

Do you promise to protect each other, to be giving and to be honest with each other, always? “We Do”

Pastor (to groom then bride): Do you promise these things and do you take _____ to be your wife/husband? “I do”

Repeat: In the name of God, I _____ take you _____, to be my wife/husband,

To have and to hold from this day onward,

For better for worse, for richer for poorer,

In sickness and in health, To love and to cherish,

Until we are parted by death.

RING BLESSING

Pastor (to groom then bride): What pledge do you offer in token of these vows? “This Ring”

Pastor: Heavenly Father, bless things rings, and grant that they who wear them may wear them with deep

faith in their love for each other. May they both do your will and always live together in Peace, Love and Abiding Joy. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

RING EXCHANGE

Pastor: In offering this ring you mark your desire to enter into the days of your lives together. Groom repeats then bride: This ring, without begin