The Covenant of Marriage

Introduction

 Dearly Beloved, we are gathered here together in

the presence of God’s Spirit to witness and celebrate the

joining together of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in

holy matrimony.

 The covenant of marriage was established by God

in creation. We read in Genesis that “God created people

in God’s own image; male and female God created them . .

. and God blessed them.” (Gen. 1: 27 – 28a) “The man

said, this at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; .

. . therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and

cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.”

 Then with his presence and power Jesus Christ

graced a wedding at Cana of Galilee, and his sacrificial

love gave us the example of the love of husband and wife.

The Apostle Paul sand, “this mystery is a profound one . . .

let each man love his wife as himself, and let the wife see

that she respects her husband.”

 And in first John we read, “Beloved, let us love one

another; for love is of God, and the one who loves is born

of God and knows God. If god so loved us, we also ought

to love one another.”

 And so it is that the union of husband and wife 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 when is it God’s will,

procreation of family. We rejoice that marriage is given by

God, blessed by Jesus Christ and sustained by the Holy

Spirit. Therefore, let marriage be hold in honor and esteem

among all peoples. For marriage is not be to entered into

unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in

accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by

God.

 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are

here today with their family and friends, to declare publicly

and personally their love for one another, and to be joined

in marriage. This is more than a social and civil occasion,

because it is the declaration of their hearts, built upon their

experiences, and enriched by their love. This is a human

 ymbol of devotion by two people who promise to give

themselves to one another through all of life’s challenges,

but more than this it is a sacred symbol, for-ordained by

God and given to God’s people.

 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ you now

stand before God, family and friends, to pledge your never

ending trust to one another. Be well assured that through

your love in each other and your faith in God, your

marriage will be blessed. How we understand God’s

relationship with us is how we should all strive to be with

one another. As God’s covenant with us is to be our God

and we to be God’s people, so to shall you

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ husband and you

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ wife.

 resentation

 It is this covenant that is realized from generation to

generation. In this tradition, I would not like to ask those

who have especially gone before \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, their parents/grandparents and have given

them your love, care and understanding in the past, will you

continue to give them your love and now blessing all for

the future of their marriage?

 (“We will.”)

 I also ask everyone here assembled; friends,

relatives and associates, will you also lend your support and

blessing to this couple soon to be joined in holy matrimony.

If so, please all answer, we will?

 (“We will.”)

Invocation

 Gracious God, author of life and love, look kindly

upon \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, who come before

you seeking your blessing and guidance. Let your spirit so

rest upon them that with calmness of heart and

steadfastness of love, they may honor the promises they

make this day. May your light of peace, O Lord, be with

them all the days of their lives. Amen.

 ntroduction to Reading

 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I thank

you for the privilege of standing before you on this special

and sacred moment of your lives. In asking hundreds of

couples what they thought to be the most essential

ingredient for a good marriage, most people simply replied,

“It is being one another’s closest and best friend.” In this

regard, let me recite for you this contemporary reading

simply entitled I Love You.

I Love You by Roy Croft

I love you, not only for what you are,

But for what I am when I am with you.

I love you, not only for what you have

made of yourself, but for 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 foolish,

weak things that you can't help dimly

see there. And for drawing out into

 he light all the beautiful belongings

that no one else had looked quite far

enough to find. I love you, because you

are helping me to make of the lumber of

my life not a tavern but a temple; Out the

works of my ever day not a reproach, but

a song. 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.

Introduction to Reading

This is what I have heard from so many other couples. Let

me now say to you what is most significant from my

perspective and in my words.

 onsideration

 As God considers us each free and unique, so too

shall you respect each other. Your real task is not to be

alike, but to be together, not to mold, but to receive, and not

to change the other, but to abide with one another. It is

through this accent of acceptance that you will truly fulfill

love’s purpose. It is through your giving that you will gain.

The more you let each one be – the closer you shall

become. As God loves us for who we are – so too, then,

shall you.

Love is the Balance

 This then is the longing goal of love. It is an ideal

to which we all strive to attain. Yet, we must also keep in

balance with life the reality of just who we are. For

sometimes love is gaining and sometimes love is losing.

Sometimes love is happy and sometimes it is sad.

Sometimes love is creating and sometimes love is

forgiving. But always love is accepting and enduring. You

do know the attributes of one another as well as the faults.

May patience always be a virtue for you. Through all of

 ife, you have decided to commit yourselves to each other.

Love is actually the one resource that is never expelled with

use, but, in fact, grows stronger. For when you are together

– this is what love does. So we wish for you a deep and

real respect as you remember the past, live the present and

hope for the future.

Preparation of Vows

 As you are about to make your vows of marriage

each to the other – know that love and loyalty alone will

avail as the foundation of a happy and enduring home. No

other ties more tender, no other vows more sacred than

these you now make. So you are called upon to live

together with love and deep friendship; each one being for

the well being of the other, so that your lives together will

be full of joy and the home which you will establish may

abide in God’s grace, now and forever more.

additional Question to Vows

 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will you have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

to be your wedded wife, to live together in the holy estate

of matrimony? Will you love her, and comfort her, in

sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep you

only unto her so long as you both shall live?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will you have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, to be

your wedded husband, to live together in the holy estate of

matrimony? Will you love him, and comfort him, in

sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep you

only unto him so long as you both shall live?

Vows of Marriage

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, to be my

wife; and I promise to stand beside you and with you

always; in times of celebration and in times of sadness; in

times of pleasure and in times of pain; in times of health

and in times of illness; I will live with you and love you

always.

 , \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, to be my

husband; and I promise to stand beside you and with you

always; in times of celebration and in times of sadness; in

times of pleasure and in times of pain; in times of health

and in times of illness; I will live with you and love you

always.

Meaning of the Rings

 These wedding rings serve as the symbol of the

vows you have just spoken. They are the outward and

visible sign of an inward and invisible love which binds

your hearts together in that great mystery. As the rings are

of the finest of earth’s materials, so too, is your love of the

richest of spiritual values.

Blessing of the Rings

 O Lord, we ask your blessing upon these rings; may

the rings be a reminder of promises, promises evermore

living and growing in the spirit of your eternal love. And

may those who give them and wear them abide in your

peace and continue in your favor all the days of their lives.

Amen.

 ing Vows

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring as a sign of my

vow, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I marry you;

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy

Spirit.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring as a sign of my

vow, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I marry you;

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy

Spirit.

Prayer

 Most merciful and gracious God, of whom the

whole family in heaven and earth is named: Bestowed

upon these your children, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the seal of your approval, and your

paternal benediction. Grant unto them grace to fulfill, with

pure and steadfast affection, the vow and covenant between

them made. Guide them together, we pray, in the way of

righteousness and peace, that loving you and serving others ith one heart and mind, all the days of their life, they may

be abundantly enriched with the token of your everlasting

favor, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

 As we say together with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the Lord’s prayer in which have been

taught, as well as in their tradition:

“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.

Declaration

 And so 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 there is no

more loneliness, for each of you will be a companion to the

other. You are two bodies, but there is only one life before

you. Go now to your dwelling place, to enter into the days

 f your life together. And may your days be good and long

upon the earth and in the heavens.

Pronouncement

 Forasmuch as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

have consented together in Holy Wedlock and have

witnessed the same before God and God’s company, and

thereto have pledged their faith each to the other, and have

declared the same by joining hands and by giving and

receiving rings, by the authority vested in my, but most of

all, by the power of their own love; be it thereby

acknowledged that they are husband and wife together.

Benediction

 And now may the Lord bless you and keep you, the

Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to

you. The Lord lift up his entire countenance upon you and

give you peace.

Exchange of Affection

Announcement

 It gives me great pleasure to be the first to announce

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as husband and wife.