

## Religious Ceremony

### The Charge

#### Officiant

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today in the sight of God and in the presence of these witnesses to celebrate the union of **Groom and Bride** in the bonds of holy matrimony. Marriage is an honorable estate, instituted by God that reflects the mystical union, which exists between Jesus Christ and His church. It is therefore not to be entered into lightly, but reverently in the fear of God.

**Groom and Bride**, I charge you both as you stand before God who sees into our hearts, having considered this holy covenant you are about to make, that you now declare before this company your pledge of faith, one to the other.

Be well assured that if these solemn vows are faithfully kept, as God's word demands, and if you endeavor to do the will of your Father in heaven, He will bless your marriage, grant you fulfillment in it, and establish peace in your home.

### Declaration of Intent

#### Officiant

**Groom/Bride** will you take this woman to be your wedded wife, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you pledge to love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health, forsaking all others as long as you both shall live?

**Groom/Bride**: "I will"

#### Officiant

Who gives this woman to this man?

**Father or Stand-In**: "I am"

(Bring the couple forward and have them face each other)

### Homily

#### Officiant

*[Verse reading followed by short message on marriage]*

### Vows

#### Groom and Bride

I, **Groom/Bride**, take you, **Groom/Bride**, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and health, to love and to cherish until death parts us, according to God's holy law I pledge to you my faith.

## Exchange of Rings

### Officiant

Are there tokens of this union to be exchanged?

(Bless the rings and hand the first to groom and then to bride)

**Groom/Bride**, place this ring on the finger of your bride and repeat after me. This ring I give you as a token and a pledge of our never-ending faith and abiding love.

(The couple joins hands with the pastor's hand over theirs. Pray "With these rings they bind themselves together...")

Because **Groom and Bride** have consented together in holy wedlock, have witnessed the same before God and this company and have also pledged their faith to each other, and have sealed the same in the giving and receiving of rings, I pronounce that they are now and forever husband and wife together, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Groom**, you may kiss your bride.

(Pray and bless the union)

Ladies and Gentlemen, may I present to you \_\_\_\_\_

### Marriage Verses (Choose one passage)

#### Genesis 2:18-24

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found.

So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

#### Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work. If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!

Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.

A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

#### 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

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, always perseveres. Love never fails

## **Traditional Non-Religious Ceremony**

Welcome, family, friends and loved ones. We gather here today to celebrate the wedding of **Groom** and **Bride**. You have come here to share in this formal commitment they make to one another, to offer your love and support to this union, and to allow **Groom** and **Bride** to start their married life together surrounded by the people dearest and most important to them.

So welcome to one and all, who have traveled from near and far. **Groom** and **Bride** thank you for your presence here today, and now ask for your blessing, encouragement, and lifelong support, for their decision to be married.

### **Definition of Marriage**

#### **Officiant:**

Marriage is perhaps the greatest and most challenging adventure of human relationships. No ceremony can create your marriage; only you can do that – through love and patience; through dedication and perseverance; through talking and listening, helping and supporting and believing in each other; through tenderness and laughter; through learning to forgive, learning to appreciate your differences, and by learning to make the important things matter, and to let go of the rest. What this ceremony can do is to witness and affirm the choice you make to stand together as life-mates and partners.

### **Declaration of Intent**

#### **Officiant:**

Will you, **Groom/Bride**, take this woman/man to be your wedded wife/husband?

#### **Groom/Bride: I will**

### **Readings**

In the spirit of the importance of strong friendships to a marriage, **Groom** and **Bride** have asked two friends to read selections about love that especially resonate with them.

### **1st READING / 2nd READING**

### **Support of Community**

#### **Officiant:**

Two people in love do not live in isolation. Their love is a source of strength with which they may nourish not only each other but also the world around them. And in turn, we, their community of friends and family, have a responsibility to this couple. By our steadfast care, respect, and love, we can support their marriage and the new family they are creating today.

Will everyone please rise.

#### **Officiant:**

Will you who are present here today, surround **Groom** and **Bride** in love, offering them the joys of your friendship, and supporting them in their marriage?

**All: We will**

**Officiant**

You may be seated.

**Wedding Vows**

**Officiant:**

We've come to the point of your ceremony where you're going to say your vows to one another. But before you do that, I ask you to remember that love – which is rooted in faith, trust, and acceptance - will be the foundation of an abiding and deepening relationship. No other ties are more tender, no other vows more sacred than those you now assume. If you are able to keep the vows you take here today, not because of any religious or civic law, but out of a desire to love and be loved by another person fully, without limitation, then your life will have joy and the home you establish will be a place in which you both will find the direction of your growth, your freedom, and your responsibility.

Please now read the vows you have written for each other.

**Bride and Groom**

I **Groom / Bride**, take you, **Groom / Bride**, to be my husband/wife, my constant friend and partner, and my love.

I will work to create a bond of honesty, respect, and trust; one that withstands the tides of time and change, and grows along with us.

I vow to honor and respect you for all that you are and will become, taking pride in who we are, both separately and together. I promise to challenge you, and to accept challenges from you.

I will join with you and our community in an ongoing struggle to create a world we all want to live in, where love and friendship will be recognized and celebrated in all their many forms.

Our home will be a sanctuary and a respite for us and for those whom we cherish.

Above all, I will give you my love freely and unconditionally. I pledge this to you from the bottom of my heart, for all the days of our lives.

**Officiant:**

May I have the rings, please?

Please repeat after me: "I give you this ring, as a commitment of faithfulness, and as a daily reminder of my love for you."

**Officiant:**

By the power of your love and commitment, and the power vested in me, I now pronounce you husband and wife! You may kiss each other!

## Sample Vows

I, (name), take you (name), to be my (wife/husband), to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish; from this day forward until death do us part.

I, (name), take you, (name), to be my lawfully wedded (husband/wife), my constant friend, my faithful partner and my love from this day forward. In the presence of God, our family and friends, I offer you my solemn vow to be your faithful partner in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad, and in joy as well as in sorrow. I promise to love you unconditionally, to support you in your goals, to honor and respect you, to laugh with you and cry with you, and to cherish you for as long as we both shall live.

I (name), take you (name) to be my (husband/wife), my partner in life and my one true love. I will cherish our union and love you more each day than I did the day before. I will trust you and respect you, laugh with you and cry with you, loving you faithfully through good times and bad, regardless of the obstacles we may face together. I give you my hand, my heart, and my love, from this day forward for as long as we both shall live. In the presence of God and these our friends I take thee to be my husband/wife, promising with Divine assistance to be unto thee a loving and faithful husband/wife so long as we both shall live.

I, (name), take you, (name), to be my friend, my lover, the (mother/father) of my children and my (husband/wife). I will be yours in times of plenty and in times of want, in times of sickness and in times of health, in times of joy and in times of sorrow, in times of failure and in times of triumph. I promise to cherish and respect you, to care and protect you, to comfort and encourage you, and stay with you, for all eternity.

I bring myself to you this day to share my life with you; you can trust my love, for it is real. I promise to be a faithful (husband/wife) and to unfailingly share and support your hopes, dreams and goals. I vow to be here for you always; when you fall, I will catch you; when you cry, I will comfort you; when you laugh, I will share your joy. Everything I am and everything I have is yours, from this moment forth and for eternity.

I, (name), take you, (name), to be my partner, loving what I know of you, and trusting what I do not yet know. I eagerly anticipate the chance to grow together, getting to know the (man/woman) you will become, and falling in love a little more every day. I promise to love and cherish you through whatever life may bring us. I (name) affirm my love to you, (name) as I invite you to share my life. You are the most beautiful, smart, and generous person I have ever known, and I promise always to respect you. With kindness, unselfishness and trust, I will work by your side to create a wonderful life together. I take you (name) to be my lawful wife/husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health for as long as we both shall live.

(Name), I love you. You are my best friend. Today I give myself to you in marriage. I promise to encourage and inspire you, to laugh with you, and to comfort you in times of sorrow and struggle. I promise to love you in good times and in bad, when life seems easy and when it seems hard, when our love is simple, and when it is an effort. I promise to cherish you, and to always hold you in highest regard. These things I give to you today, and all the days of our life.

(Name), as I have given you my hand to hold, so I give you my life to keep. This vow is made in love, kept in faith, lived in hope, and eternally made new. I take you as a gift from God, to be my lifelong companion through tears and laughter, sickness and health, hardship and plenty. I will love you faithfully and constantly, now and forever. I give you my heart and love from this day forward as long as we both shall live.

### **Groom**

In your eyes, I have found my home.

In your heart, I have found my love.

In your soul, I have found my mate.

With you, I am whole, full, alive. You make me laugh. You let me cry.

You are my breath, my every heartbeat.

You are my greatest calling.

I am yours.

You are mine.

Of this we are certain.

You are lodged in my heart.

The small key is lost.

You must stay there forever.

### **Bride**

You are my inspiration and my soul's fire.

You are the magic of my days.

You help me laugh, you teach me love.

You provide a safe place for me, unlike I've ever known.

You free me to sing my own song.

You are my greatest boon.

I am yours.

You are mine.

Of this we are certain.

You are lodged in my heart.

The small key is lost.

You must stay there forever.

## **Christian VOWS**

### **Groom**

(Name), my love, I have prayed my entire life that God would send me the right person to marry. He has given me the desire of my heart in you. I am captivated by your beauty, refreshed by your genuineness and encouraged by your love for me. You mean more to me than anything else in this world. I will seek to love you sacrificially, as Christ loved the church. I will seek to understand you and listen to your innermost thoughts. I will protect you and provide security for you. I will encourage and support you in the interests and goals that you have. I will honor, respect and adore you. You alone will be my desire as I forsake all others. I will be exhilarated with your love. (Name), I commit my entire being and covenant my love, representing my life, promising to remain committed to you, along side of you, as long as I shall live on this earth.

### **Bride**

(Name), I love you so much! I'm committing everything I have and everything I am to God first and then to you. You are my greatest joy. You've become my best friend lovingly designed by our Heavenly Father. He knew from the very beginning that (First & Last Name) would be the man I would eventually marry. You are the unique person who meets my special needs and adds to my life things that were missing, bringing out the absolute best in me that only you and your closeness to God could bring out. Our love has that perfect completeness I hoped and prayed for, a special love that is from the Lord. He promises to go before us and through his special power, hold us together. (Name), I'm confident we will last a lifetime as husband and wife and I will love, support, encourage, challenge and cherish you throughout that lifetime.