

Ceremony / Service Draft

- **Processional** - Wedding music - this can be taped or perhaps arranged with the venue (optional)

- **Opening Words:**

We are here today to celebrate the marriage of Groom and Bride. A marriage is a very special ceremony. For Groom and Bride, this ceremony means that they will count on one another, that they will treat one another with care, and that they will continue to share their lives with each other as partners, as friends, and to go on building their future together. This ceremony expresses the spiritual bond that they experience together. Their union is not a time of static contentment with each other and the world around them, but an ongoing process of exploring the fullness of their individual persons and sharing their friendship and love with you, their friends and family.

I welcome the opportunity to give voice to my conviction that every relationship of love between human beings is holy, sacred, worthy of celebration and public affirmation. I am delighted today to perform this ceremony of marriage for two people who love and honor one another.

What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined together to strengthen each other in all labor, to minister to each other in all sorrow, to share with each other in all gladness, to be one with each other in the silent unspeakable memories?

Love is not some accident we fall into - as we grow in love, then there is the possibility that our tomorrows will be even more joyous, more tender and caressing, more devoted to life flowing through us; tomorrows more full of the thrill of life even as each today is better than yesterday. Love has the capacity for that magic. Perhaps only love has such

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capacity. This love does not start with a public ceremony; this ceremony is only a public testimony, a community YES to what already exists.

o **Exchange of Vows**

Groom and Bride, it is time to say the pledges which will affirm your marriage. Please take each other's hands, face each other, and repeat after me:

I, Groom, take you, Bride, to be no other than yourself. Loving and trusting what I know of you, with respect to your integrity, and with faith in your love for me, through our years together, and in all that life may bring us, I accept you as my partner for life.

I, Bride, take you, Groom, to be no other than yourself. Loving and trusting what I know of you, with respect to your integrity, and with faith in your love for me, through our years together, and in all that life may bring us, I accept you as my partner for life.

o **Exchange of Symbols**

We have a double-ring ceremony.

Do you, Groom, take this woman Bride, to be your wedded wife, to love, honor and cherish her through sickness and in health, through times of happiness and travail, until death do you part? (Answer I will or I do) Please place the ring on her finger and repeat after me: With this ring, I thee wed, and forever pledge my devotion.

Do you Bride, take this man Groom, to be your wedded husband, to love, honor and cherish him through sickness and in health, through times of happiness and travail, until death do you part? (Answer I will or I do) Please place the ring on his finger and repeat after me: With this ring, I thee wed, and forever pledge my devotion.

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- **Reading & Homily**

- **Reading:**

From the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians:

Love is patient. Love is kind, and envies no one.

Love is never boastful nor proud, nor rude,

Never selfish or quick to take offense.

Love keeps no score of wrongs, does not gloat over the mistakes of others, but delights in the truth.

There is nothing love cannot face,

There is no limit to its faith, its hope and its endurance.

In a word, there are three things that last forever:

faith, hope, and love.

And the greatest of these is love.

- **Homily:**

Groom and Bride, the reading describes the gifts of the spirit, gifts that are often recommended to couples beginning their marriage; for marriage is an act of faith.

To give yourself, your life, and your love into union with another requires trust and confidence, in yourself, and in your beloved. Such giving, where each of you risks the vulnerability of being open to the other, requires a sense of trust and confidence in life, as well. There is no guarantee that being married will make your lives easier; marriage is often very complicated, and being married requires that you accept significant responsibilities.

Hope is what encourages us to cheerfully take up this most difficult path, because we believe in where it's going, and perhaps, because we value the challenge and the joy of the journey as well. Groom and Bride, if you believe that life is, inherently, good, that we experience life more deeply and fully when we can share our experience and understanding of life with a loved and trusted partner,

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then it makes sense to open your heart and soul to another in love and trust, because you are carrying the kind of hope that can sustain a marriage.

Love is the third, and the greatest gift that Paul recommends to us. The kind of love which sustains a marriage is a way of purposefully responding to, and believing in, the inherent and sacred goodness that is woven through all of life, that is kindled in each human spirit, and which you make accessible to your partner in marriage. Such love is rooted in mutual respect, for each of you is created in the image of God.

You each have, and will continue to have, different ideas, hopes, and interests, different strengths, different needs. And you have said that you are each enriched, not diminished, by the different insights and perspectives you bring to one another. The blessing and strength of your marriage will unfold as you grow in understanding of yourselves and of each other, so that you can nourish each other's true growing. Allow your love to stimulate and challenge each other, and enlarge each other's world. Attend to those things that nourish and sustain your love for one another and for life.

So may your lives, ever nourished by the gifts of faith, hope, and love, be a blessing to all others whose lives touch yours.

- **Pronouncement and Blessing:**

Groom and Bride, as you have chosen to join together in a bond of marriage, and have pledged yourselves to each other in the presence of family and friends, it is my joy and privilege in accordance with the law of Connecticut and by virtue of the authority vested in me by the law of Connecticut to pronounce you partners in life. You may kiss your spouse.

- **Blessing / Benediction / Closing Words**

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Groom and Bride, having agreed in your desire to go forward together, seeking an even richer, deepening relationship because you see in each other that for which there are no words, and because you have pledged yourselves, one to the other, we rejoice to recognize that you are now husband and wife.

We rejoice this day in the marriage of Groom and Bride.

We celebrate the love that has brought you to this day. With joy that deepens through many years, may you know its meaning and its mystery--how you become truly one in sharing yourselves with one another and in caring for one another, and yet, in love, remain truly two in your uniqueness.

May your house be a place of happiness for all who enter it, a place where the old and the young are renewed in each other's company, a place for growing, a place for music, a place for laughter.

And when shadows and darkness fall within its rooms, may it still be a place of hope and strength for all who enter it, especially for those who are entrusted to your care.

May no person be alien to your compassion.

May your larger family be the family of all humankind.

And may the beauty and the bounty of your love for one another constantly enrich those who are nearest to you and dearest to you. AMEN.

- **Recessional**

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- **Blessing before Dinner**

- Friends and relatives, you occupy an important place in this couple's lives. You have sustained them in the past with your thoughts and prayers. And so on this day of celebration, this literal 'breaking of bread' among those who love and cherish Groom and Bride, I ask you to remain steadfast in your support in times of trouble and generous in your joy when they experience success and happiness.

- **Blessing the Food**

- Lord God who is all things to us; He in whom we live and move and breathe and have our being, we ask, O Holy One, that we remember to cherish this food, savoring the tastes, the smells, the miracle of nourishment to our bodies. We ask that we remember to cherish each other, to savor our relationships, and these connections of friendship and love. This and all other blessings we ask in your name, Lord. Amen.