

A Celebration of the Renewal of Vows

and

Key West, Conch Republic

the Rev. Dr. Randolph W. B. Becker, officiating

We are gathered here today to celebrate the recommitment to marriage of _____ and _____. It is fitting and appropriate that you, their families and friends, be here to witness and to participate in this ceremony, for the ideals, understanding, and mutual respect which they have brought to their marriage have their roots in the love, friendship and guidance you have given them; the ideals, understanding, and mutual respect which you hold as your own have their roots in the love, friendship, and guidance they have given you.

_____ and _____ know that you come here out of a sense of love and warmth of heart; as they turn to speak the words which express the unity of their lives, they will be mindful of your presence and know that in good days or bad, they will never be alone.

They are also mindful of those who stood with them _____ years ago, and who have been with them throughout the years of their marriage who are not with us this day . . . separated by distance or death . . . and know that their marriage has been blessed by a great cloud of witness of love and support.

_____ and _____, _____ years ago you entered into a union which is most sacred and most serious, requiring of those who enter into it a complete and unreserved giving of self. It has joined you together in a relationship so close and so intimate that it has profoundly affected your whole lives.

Your shared life, with its hopes and disappointments, its successes and failures, its pleasures and pains, has unfolded for you together. Your love for each other has made it easier. The love with which you joined your hands and hearts and lives has grown deeper and stronger as you have gone on.

_____, do you once again invite _____ to be your husband, to continue in the covenant of marriage? Will you continue to love him, comfort him, honor and keep him in sickness and in good health, and forsaking all others, be faithful unto him as long as you both shall live? If so, please say, "I do."

_____: "I do."

_____, do you once again invite _____ to be your wife, to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you continue to love her, comfort her, honor and keep her in sickness and in good health, and forsaking all others, be faithful unto her as long as you both shall live? If so, please say, "I do."

_____: "I do."

_____ and _____, in all of your days, remember that love is a respect for the preciousness and worth of a person. Love gives and love receives. Love cannot live in itself, but must be nurtured with a mutual and ultimate sharing, a giving and a taking. Love is the noblest passion a man or woman can feel for it surpasses all lesser desires. Love is precious because it is an ethical commitment to another, which honors the duties of the promises made here, not from a sense of obligation, but from the depths of the most divine sentiment a man or woman can enjoy.

Many years ago a man named Paul wrote to the people of Corinth what would become a famous letter. As part of that letter he asked them to think about the nature and meaning of love. Hear his words, as we might receive them today, and sense their eternal wisdom.

If someone were to be able to understand all languages, but not understand the meaning of love, that person would be no better than a meaningless noise.

And if someone were to be able to know all things, but did not know love, that person would really know nothing.

And if someone were to be so faithful that mountains could be moved, but did not show love, that person would move no one.

And if someone were to act in ways of generosity and kindness, but did not act out of love, that person's actions would be as empty as the breeze in the skies above.

But, if someone were to want to know love, this is what must be known:

Love is patient and kind;

love has no room in it for jealousy or boastful behaviour.

One who knows love does not insist on his or her own way.

Love that is true is not irritable nor resentful.

When love is known, one does not rejoice in wrongs, but rather in the right.

Such a love can bear all things, finds the way to believe all things, builds hope in all things, and endures all that come its way.

When each of us was a child, we viewed things as children do; as we grew into adulthood, we saw things differently. Even as adults we grow, and that which we only partially comprehend may become known to us later. We seek to perceive what will be of enduring value to us.

Now, everything else in this life passes away, but love, true love, never ends.

Knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and possessions all wither in time, but love is eternal. These three abide - faith, hope and love - and the greatest of these is love.

Please join hands and repeat after me:

I, _____, celebrate with you _____, as the wife of my days and the companion of my house; we have kept together what share of trouble and sorrow our lives have laid upon us, but moreover we have created together our store of goodness and plenty and love.

I, _____, celebrate with you _____, as the husband of my days and the companion of my house; we have kept together what share of trouble and sorrow our lives have laid upon us, but moreover we have created together our store of goodness and plenty and love.

Your rings, with which you pledged your marriage _____ years ago, have become symbols of the unbroken circle of your love. Love freely given has no beginning and no end. Love freely given has no giver and no receiver. You are each the giver and each the receiver. May your rings always call to mind the freedom and power of this love.

Each repeats: "May my ring, a gift from you, always be a symbol of our abiding love and unity."

OPTION

(taking up the wedding cup:)

Life is poured out for us like wine, a mixture of the bitter and the sweet, brought to balance and delight with the passage of age. Many days you eaten and drunk together, and shared the sustenance and wonder of life. Now, as the years go on, may your cup always be full to overflowing and may each know that in offer of life's cup to the other, you find its sweetness for yourself as well.

(The couple share the cup)



Aware of the many meanings of this hour and overjoyed by its significance, we pray the spirit of trust, understanding, and love may be with _____ and _____ through all the years that lie ahead. Whatever trials and testings may come, may they continue to trust each other wholly, for without such faith marriage is a mockery; may they continue to understand each other, for without understanding there is neither acceptance nor forgiveness; and may they continue to truly love each other, for without love marriage is only an empty shell from which the bird has flown.

In the home they have built together, may they find the brightness of the laughter of children and of many friends; may it be a haven from the tensions of our time and a wellspring of thy strength; and in all the world may it be the one place they most want to be, the place where they continue to experience the divine mystery -- the secret of how two become one.

May this shining hour be an open door through which _____ and _____ will go forth to sustain that dearest of all relationships, a happy, harmonious marriage.

May the years deal gently with you; walking together may you continue to find far more in life than either would have found alone; and even more fully may you come to know these supreme truths: that caring is sharing . . . that living is giving . . . that life is eternal . . . and that love is the crown.

Now, having heard _____ and _____ declare and renew their love for each other before this company through the taking of vows and the blessings of rings, I invite you to join me in honoring and celebrating their two decades as husband and wife. Congratulations!