

Father Dyer UMC Covenant Ceremony

<The Welcome>

On behalf of _____ and _____, I would like to welcome all of you to this celebration of Joy. Today, a man and a woman have freely chosen to share their lives together in the unity of marriage. We are privileged to witness this joyful occasion and to participate in their time of happiness.

<Presentation of the Bride>

Who presents this woman to be married to this man?

<Family Segment, optional>

<Homily on The Nature of Marriage>

As individual people, we are born into this world whole and complete. Life unfolds this wholeness as we pass through it, and it passes through us. The desire to share this life seems to be an inherent part of our nature as human beings. The other person enhances who we are in our selves, and reflects this back to us in love. Thus, the coming together of two people into the single mystery of marriage is almost as old as human consciousness.

There is no magic in human promises or social ritual. But there is power in love, a power which can go far beyond all that seeks to divide us and fracture us, both from within and without. Today, we celebrate this joyful hope of love, taking concrete form in a covenant of shared life. Today, let us affirm this confession of faith in a common future for these two people, and let us support their union with all of our love, and our strength and our being.

<Homily on the Promises of Marriage>

In a moment, _____ and _____ will join together in a common promise to live together in love, to be and have their life together, in love with each other. In fidelity to this promise, they will seek the well-being of the other person, knowing finally that the worth and value of any individual is a unique gift to be cherished and respected no matter what, a gift that can neither be given nor taken away by anyone else. And in fidelity to each other, they will promise to give priority to this relationship over all other relationships, not to the exclusion of family and friends, but seeking the primary context of their new life in their love for each other. _____ and _____ recognize that they are part of the flow of life itself, and that they are responsible for life as it passes through them. They will promise to provide for any children born of their relationship (or that they bring to this relationship), raising them with all love and care so that they too, might come to know the fullness of life.

<Intentions, The Covenant of Marriage>

My friends, in presenting yourselves before us today, you announce to the world your desire to become one with each other in the relationship of marriage.

(Minister says to groom)

_____, will you have this woman to be your wife?

(Groom answers, I WILL.)

(Minister says to bride)

_____, will you have this man to be your husband?

(Bride answers, I WILL)

(Bride passes bouquet to Maid of Honor, couple faces each other)

<The Vows>

A vow is but a human statement, as fragile as the dust of our flesh. But it becomes sacred as it is lived out in a shared reality, and it becomes holy when it is filled with love. I invite you now to establish the covenant of marriage between you by answering the following questions:

Will you live together in love, seeking the well-being of each other?

Will you live together in love, cherishing the uniqueness of each other?

Will you live together in love, giving priority to your marriage as the primary relationship in your lives?

Will you live together in love, promising to provide for the children born of your relationship (and/or that you bring to this relationship), raising them with all love and care so that they too, might come to know the fullness of life?

Do you have rings?

<The Meaning of the Rings/Ring Vows>

The ring is an ancient symbol of eternal and unending fidelity. It is also a symbol of perfect unity and harmony.

(Minister says first to groom, then bride)

_____, I give you this ring, to wear on your hand, as a sign to all the world, of our love and our union.

<Pronouncement of marriage>

(Minister places hand atop couple)

By the love in your hearts, by the grace of God, I pronounce _____ and _____ husband and wife.

<Unity candle-optional>

<Pastoral Prayer of Blessing>

O God, you have so consecrated the covenant of marriage that in it is represented the spiritual unity between Christ and his Church: Send therefore your blessing upon these your servants, that they may so love, honor, and cherish each other in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and for ever. Amen.

<*The Lord's Prayer*>

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, they 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, for ever and ever. Amen.

<*Benediction*>

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. Now you are two bodies, but there is only one life before you. Go now to your dwelling place, to enter into the days of your togetherness, and may they be good and long upon the face of the earth.

<*The Kiss*>

<*Introduce the Couple*>

<*Recessional*>