

Prelude Music

Introduction

Dear family and friends, it is my pleasure to extend to each of you a very warm welcome on behalf of James and Michael. My name is Martin Frith, I'm a friend of Michael & James's and it's a delight for me to be in this role today.

A few comments before we begin-

At the end of the ceremony, the party begins. Our happy couple will be circulating so there will be no receiving line. You're invited to enjoy beverages and hors d'oeuvres here on the lawn and inside, as well as an afternoon of fabulous jazz. Speeches will take place following the first set of music and the wedding cake (made by Gail, James & Michael's sister-in-law) will be cut following the second set.

This is a very happy day and you too will have a part in the formal proceedings. You will be asked to signify your support with AN ENTHUSIASTIC response. So when I direct the question to all of you, that's your cue to answer in one hearty voice - *We will!!!*

Finally, a word about the ceremony. Just as James and Michael have chosen each other from among the world's multitudes, they have also carefully chosen and designed this ceremony.

They thank you very much for your love, support and presence here today.

Procession

Music Starts: It's a Wonderful World

Procession:

- Flower girls
- 2 Best Women
- Ring bearer
- James & Michael

Opening Words

The words that will be spoken here today are significant, though they are not what join these two. Nor is it this ceremony. For we are not here to mark the start of their relationship but to recognize a bond they have nurtured for almost 10 years. Michael and James have already joined themselves together, and we have gathered so they might bear witness before us of the love that has grown between them.

This is an act as ancient as the human race and, at the same time, as new and fresh as the dawn of each morning. For it speaks of the past and hopes for the future, of the life of the individual and the existence of the community. Marriage is a going forth, a giving up of one way in search of a greater fulfillment than either can achieve alone, risking what they are for what they might be.

Today let us celebrate with Michael and James, in their hopes and desire for what is yet to be.

Declaration of Intentions

Michael and James, you have invited us to witness the happiness you have found in each other. Are you ready to make the pledges through which you commit yourselves to each other in love? Reply: We Are.

Recognition of Gathered Company

Each of you has been invited here because you are a special person in the lives of Michael and James. You have come to celebrate with them and to witness their commitment to one another. Will you, their family and friends, do all in your power to support this couple now, and in the years ahead? We will.

Words to the Couple

Ultimately, two people who love each other must ask themselves how much they hope for as their love grows and deepens, and how much risk they are willing to take. It is indeed a fearful gamble. For if we commit ourselves to one person for life, this is not as many think, a rejection of freedom; rather it demands the courage to move into all the risks of freedom and the risk of love that is permanent; into a love which is not possession but participation. When love is not possession, but participation, then it is part of that co-creation which is our deepest human calling.

Marriage is one of the most remarkable and most courageous human acts- the promise of two human beings to share life together on all levels, physical, emotional, economic, and spiritual. A promise made in the face of the certainty of death, the certainty of change, and the uncertainty of *everything else*. There is nothing else quite like this act – nothing so foolish, nothing so profound.

Reading 1 -*Anne Morrow Lindbergh, Gift from the Sea*

"Margaret *** is Michael & James's niece from Brockville, Margaret, would you come forward and share the first reading with us?"

A good relationship has a pattern like a dance and is built on the same rules. The partners do not need to hold on tightly, because they move confidently in the same pattern, intricate but gay and swift and free like the country dance of Mozart's.

To touch heavily would be to arrest the pattern and freeze the movement, to check the endlessly changing beauty of its unfolding. There is no place here for the possessive clutch, the clinging arm, the heavy hand; only the barest touch in passing. Now arm in arm, now face to face, now back to back-- it does not matter which. Because they know they are partners moving to the same rhythm, creating a pattern together, and being visibly nourished by it.

The joy of such a pattern is not only the joy of creation or the joy of participation, it is also the joy of living in the moment. Lightness of touch and living in the moment are intertwined.

Reading 2 -*Anne Morrow Lindbergh, Gift from the Sea*

"It is my pleasure to invite Robert to share a second reading. Rob is a good friend of James and Michael"

When you love someone, you do not love them all the time, in exactly the same way from moment to moment. It is an impossibility. It is even a lie to pretend to. Yet this is exactly what most of us demand. We have so little faith in the ebb and flow of life, of love, of relationships. We leap at the flow of the tide and resist in terror at its ebb. We are afraid it will never return. We insist on permanency, on duration, on continuity, when the only continuity possible, in life, as in love, is in growth, in fluidity, in freedom, in the sense that the dancers are free, barely touching as they pass, but partners in the same pattern.

The only real security is not in owning or possessing, not in demanding or expecting. Security in a relationship lies neither in looking back to what it was, nor forward to what it might be, but in living in the present relationship and accepting it as it is now. For relationships are like islands. One must accept them for what they are here and now - islands, surrounded and interrupted by the sea, and continually visited and abandoned by the tides. One must accept the security of the winged life, the ebb and flow of intermittency.

Exchange of Vows - *Will be printed on separate pieces of paper*

Michael's Vows to James

Dear James, in the nine plus years we've been together,
I've come to realize how much I look forward
to growing old with you.

Though we are so different, I know my life is
richer for your presence.

Today, I renew my promise to
share my life openly with you,

to respect your uniqueness and
to support you in the fulfillment of your dreams.

I promise to laugh with you and to cry with you,
as we shape our future together.

With these simple words and all the
love in my heart, I bind my life to yours.

James's Vows to Michael

Dear Michael, in the nine plus years we've been together,
You have helped me blossom into my own person.

You have shown me that I deserved
to be happy and loved.

You have walked with me on
my journey of discovery.

For all that you have done and
for all that you will do, I thank you.

With my hope for a future –
full of fulfillment for us and our family,

I bind my life to yours.

Exchange of Rings

For thousands of years, rings have been exchanged as a symbol of wedding vows. These simple gold bands are not of great value in and of themselves. But what they stand for now and what they will come to mean over time is beyond price. The great circle of Life itself is symbolized in these small circles on your fingers.

As the ring is placed on the finger, each party says:

Michael/James, I give you this ring as a sign of my love and commitment.

Pronouncement

No single event marks a marriage. A marriage is the freely chosen union of two individuals. It is both culmination and commencement of a lifetime of love. Through the statement of common spirit and the exchange of rings, you have done what in truth neither state nor church can do: you have joined yourselves in a shared destiny.

By the authority vested in me by the Province of Ontario, I now pronounce you, legally married and invite you to share your first of many kisses as a married couple

Nuptial Kiss

Signing of the License and Register

Ladies and Gentlemen, James, Michael, and their witnesses Cathy & Pat will take a few moments to sign the licence and register.

Closing Words *(Invite guests to stand)*

The great acts of love are done by those who are habitually performing small acts of kindness. Love is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude everyday. It is standing together and embracing the world. Love is inspiring in each other a dream. It is knowing that even when you are alone, you will never be lonely again. And the great happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved. Loved for ourselves. And even loved in spite of ourselves.

Introduction of Couple

Ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome James and Michael, the newly wedded couple.

Recessional Music