

**Marriage of M & E**  
**June, 12 2015**  
**Allentown, PA**

**Welcome: by Jo VonRue**

We are assembled here in this sacred space to join this man and this woman in the bonds of Holy Matrimony. This day is truly a special one, as E and M stand together to declare their commitment to a love strong enough for a lifetime. They are prepared to enter into a new beginning, ready to celebrate the rite of passage that marks their entrance into married life.

But this new beginning is, of course, only the continued unfolding of two lives with full and rich histories of their own, of two pasts, filled with joy and sorrow, love and learning. Marriage is neither an endpoint of their individual journeys nor a mere marker on the way. It is a doorway that they choose to step through together, not knowing where this new road may take them, but sure that they are ready to continue this path together. As they walk through this doorway of marriage, they promise each other neither perfection nor peace, but rather their dedication to the ongoing process of declaring faith in each other, trusting both who they are and who they yet will be.

E and M would also like to celebrate the people who are important in their lives, but are unable to be with us today. We keep their absent loved ones, especially Ginny Heiss, Bill Coyne, Joe Silverman, and Joe Chow in our hearts. Their blessings and support are present in spirit and loving memory.

M and E have found in one another the person each finds most dear in this world. They have recognized a kindred spirit with whom they intend to unite for the rest of their days. Such love is a cherished gift and not to be taken lightly. They have stated their intent to enter into marriage willingly and reverently. Do you, invited here to witness their matrimonial vows, pledge to support and affirm their union as a community committed to their spiritual and ethical well-being as husband and wife? ~ If so, please say "We do"  
Congregation Responds "*We do.*"

**Reading 1: Gail Heiss – mother of the bride**  
**I Corinthians 13: Verses 1-8, 13**

I would like to invite E's mother, G forward to share a reading with us.

If I had the gift of being able to speak in other languages without learning them, and could speak in every language there is in all of heaven and earth, but didn't love others, it would be of no value whatever. I would only be making a lot of noise. If I had the gift of prophecy and knew all about what is going to happen in the future – knew everything about everything – but didn't love others, what good would it be? Even if I had the gift of faith so that I could speak to a mountain and make it move, I would still be worth nothing at all without love. If I gave everything I have to poor people, and if I were burned alive for preaching the Gospel but didn't love others, it would be of no value whatever.

Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong. It is never glad about injustice, but rejoices whenever truth wins out. If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him. All the special gifts and powers from God will someday come to an end, but love goes on forever. Someday prophecy, and speaking in unknown languages, and special knowledge – these gifts will disappear. There are three things that remain – faith, hope, and love – and the greatest of these is love.

**Reading 2: P – mother of the groom**

I would now like to invite M's mother, P forward to share her reading with us.

Wilfred Arian Peterson, "The Art of a Good Marriage":

Happiness in marriage is not something that just happens,  
A good marriage must be created.  
In the art of marriage, the little things are the big things.  
It is never being too old to hold hands.  
It is remembering to say, "I love you," at least once a day.  
It is never going to sleep angry.  
It is at no time taking the other for granted;  
The courtship should not end with the honeymoon,  
It should continue through all the years.  
It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives.  
It is standing together facing the world.  
It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family.  
It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude  
Of duty or sacrifice, but in the spirit of joy.  
It is speaking words of appreciation  
And demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.  
It is not looking for perfection in each other.  
It is cultivating flexibility, patience,  
Understanding and a sense of humor.  
It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.  
It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.  
It is finding room for the things of the spirit.  
It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.  
It is establishing a relationship in which the independence is equal,  
Dependence is mutual and the obligation is reciprocal.  
It not only marrying the right partner, it is being the right partner,  
It is discovering what marriage can be, at its best.

### **Unity Ceremony:**

Every time I have hung out with M and E there is beer. Or, at least talk of beer. Heck, I think my husband even bought them some kind of beer brewing turkey fryer thing as a wedding gift... sorry for the spoiler... We now take this time to recognize their love for beer... oh, and I suppose for each other too... as they pour the ceremonial black and tan to represent their lives mixing together... like beer.

### **Homily: by Jo VonRue**

I've only known M and E for a year I guess...though it feels like much longer, my life has been blessed with their friendship ever since then. When I first met them, it was SO evident, and it still is how much they love each other. They have such a great dynamic, they are fun and silly, but can also be serious when necessary, and that is what a good solid marriage needs. When I asked both E and M separately why they have chosen to spend their forever lives with one another, what I expected to see in response was a list of why they each loved each other, but instead what I received from both of them were their hearts packaged in the form of an email.

M's heart first told me that it is ALL the things, both the big and small things about E. M recalled to me how his mother said to him "I don't know where you found a female version of you." Which, is also exactly how I experience them as well. Mike of course, noted E's brilliance and passion, and her humor, and above all, her commitment to coexist as one faithful, committed, equal partner. A partnership which allows them both to grow and flourish because of the support and love they give one another. My favorite part of this email exchange between each of them was the way E opened her heart in her reply to me, she said "what I initially thought was a simple question actually had my mind overflowing with all of the (what seems like hundreds of examples of why M is my perfect partner. I ended this thought process so in love, giddy, and ecstatic to vow to spend the rest of my life with Him." She too noted many of the same things M loves about her that she finds in her love of him. Intelligence, patience, humor, respect are all qualities that E could see in M from the very beginning.

The love that links M and E together is a love that will withstand the test of trials and tribulations, heartbreak and sadness, and of course the uncertainty of life but also the celebration of even the simplest of life's goals and blessings. There is no greater commitment that we make in this life than to join with another to create family. It is the most difficult task entrusted to us. Yet it is the source of our greatest joy. As the writer Rilke said, "love is the ultimate task, the final test and proof, the work for which all other work is but preparation... Love is to become the world for the sake of another person..."

May you know true intimacy; intellectual intimacy, emotional intimacy, physical intimacy, and spiritual intimacy. May you find the stability of a joint center where you can welcome change. And most of all, may you receive each other joyfully, and with open hearts, into this blessed union of marriage.

**Declaration of Consent:**

M and E, have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage?" Will you honor each other as husband and wife for the rest of your lives? Will you accept children lovingly and raise them according to just and moral values? If so, please say "We will"

**Vows:**

Because it is your intention to enter into marriage, please join your right hands and declare your consent before the community that loves and sustains you through all of life's challenges and celebrations.

- I, M, take you, E, to be my wife.
  - \*I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health.
  - \*I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.
  
- \*I, E, take you, M, to be my husband.
  - \*I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health.
  - \* I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.

May I have the rings please?

**Blessing and Exchanging of Rings**

The wedding ring serves as a symbol of the sacred covenant you have just affirmed. They are the outward and visible signs of the love which binds your lives together. These seamless rings have no beginning and no end, and therefore symbolize the perfection of a love that can always renew itself without end. I ask the community of friends (that's you guys) and family to repeat after me:

**COMMUNITY:** "We bless these rings with our collective love and support"

- **M:** (placing the wedding ring on his wife's ring finger): E, take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity.
- **E:** (placing the wedding ring on her husband's ring finger): M, take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity.

**Benediction:**

M and E,  
May love and strength be in your hands  
May love and courage be in your heart  
May love and wisdom be in your mind  
May love go with you and work through you  
Today and in all days.

It is my pleasure to introduce to you for the first time as husband and wife  
M and E.  
You may kiss.

**And exit ...**