

A Simple Civic Centre Ceremony

THE OPENING STATEMENT

Good morning and welcome.

I am Dr. Gail McCabe, a humanist officiant affiliated with the Ontario Humanist Society and licensed to solemnize marriages in Ontario by the Office of the Registrar General.

Humanism is a non-religious ethical philosophy, a way of life, and a way of thinking, which encourages each of us, in our own way, to work toward a more humane and more responsible world.

We are gathered here today as witnesses to the marriage of _____ and _____. Their decision to enter into this union has not been taken unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, lovingly and with honesty.

Marriage is an honourable estate symbolizing the companionship, help and comfort two people may give to one another, both in good times and in bad. Marriage is one of the most intimate of all human relationships. It is the sharing of experiences by two people in love.

THE CHARGE TO THE COUPLE

You have come to love each other deeply and sincerely. That love has given you the desire to unite in marriage and to establish a home together. In this ceremony you are dedicating yourselves to give happiness and well-being, each to the other. Your marriage is an act of faith. It must not be based on the vain hope of what the other will do or will not do, might become or might not become. It must be based on the firm belief in your own individual worth and that of the other.

THE BETROTHAL

_____, do you take _____ to be your husband/wife?

Do you promise to love, comfort, honour and keep him/her, in sorrow and joy?

Do you promise to cherish him/her in honesty, tenderness and faithfulness as you enter into this union of love and trust? Answer: I do.

READING

On Love by Anatole France

It is not enough to love passionately; you must also love well. A passionate love is good doubtless, but a beautiful love is better. May you have as much strength as gentleness; may it lack nothing, not even forbearance, and let even a little compassion be mingled with it ... you are human and, because of this, capable of much suffering. If then something of compassion does not enter into the feelings you have one for the other, these feelings will not always befit all the circumstances of your life together; they will be like festive robes that will not shield you from wind and rain. We love truly only those we love even in their weakness and their poverty. To forbear, to forgive, to console – that alone is the science of love.

THE EXCHANGE OF VOWS

To be repeated phrase by phrase after the officiant .

I, _____ , take you, _____ , to be wife; to have and to hold, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health;/ to love and to cherish/ from this day forward.

I, _____ , take you, _____ , to be my husband; to have and to hold, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer in sickness and I health; to love and to cherish from this day forward.

THE EXCHANGE OF RINGS

The officiant asks for the rings and holding them says :

The ring symbolizes the unbroken circle of endless love. The custom of wearing it on the fourth finger of the left hand is based on the ancient belief that a vein from that finger leads directly to the heart which is a symbol of love and friendship.

_____, please place the ring on _____'s finger and say after me:
_____, with this ring I marry you and I promise you my love and respect.

THE PRONOUNCEMENT

_____ and _____, inasmuch as you have pledged yourselves, each to the other, and inasmuch as you have declared the same in the presence of these witnesses by exchanging vows and by giving and receiving rings, I, Gail McCabe, by the authority vested in me by the Marriage Act of the Province of Ontario, do now pronounce you, _____ and you, _____ married.

And I invite you to share your first of many kisses as a married couple.

May you always communicate openly and honestly with each other.

May your relationship be one of love and of trust.

May each of you respect the individuality of the other.

And may the happiness you share today be with you always.

THE SIGNING OF THE MARRIAGE DOCUMENTS

To follow the ceremony.