

Wedding with Children: Edward and Sandra, (and Andrew)
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We have gathered here today to witness and celebrate the wedding of **Edward Francis Norton and Sandra Catherine Laurence** in their presence of their witnesses, Jennifer and Nicolas, and Colin, and their guests, and of their son, **Andrew Laurence**.

We rejoice with Edward and Sandra that out of all the world they have found each other; and have built a family together - and they have found the deeper meaning and richness of human life in sharing it with each other.

Today, Edward and Sandra's relationship does not change. Theirs has been, and will continue to be a relationship rooted in honesty and respect, nurtured by caring and commitment, and made to flourish by devotion and love. Today their relationship simply grows stronger, made more powerful by their formally expressed desire to meet all of life's challenges together.

In honour of the families of Edward and Sandra, we would like each person to collect flowers from witnesses, and Andrew will place them in a vase in front of the pictures of his grandparents.

MARY'S INTRODUCTION

My name is Mary Beaty; I am a Humanist Chaplain, at the University of Toronto, and certified by the Ontario Humanist Society to officiate at weddings in the Province of Ontario. I am pleased and honored that Sandra and Edward have asked me to officiate at their wedding ceremony today.

Humanism is a naturalistic philosophy of life, affirming that we are all part of the global human family and that by our very nature, people have the capacity and responsibility to lead meaningful, ethical lives based on reason and compassion.

These are the values shared by Sandra and Edward, that they have chosen as the foundation of their marriage ceremony and their life together.

READINGS

Here are two short reflections on marriage and love, chosen by the couple in honour of their wedding:

Classical Chinese Poem

“I want to be your friend forever and ever
When the hills are all flat and the rivers run dry
When the trees blossom in winter
and the snow falls in summer,
when heaven and earth mix -
not till then will I part from you.”

by George Eliot

“Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but pouring them all out, just as they are, chaff and grain together, certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and with a breath of kindness blow the rest away.”

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INTENTION/BETROTHAL

It is an important universal principle, that a couple themselves shall decide when and where they will be married and to whom. I will therefore ask this couple if they are prepared to marry each other on this day.

[Ask each in turn]:

Do you now declare your willingness to take Edward to be your husband and Sandra to be your wife, affirming you have no knowledge of any impediment to your being lawfully joined in marriage? (I do)

Are you now prepared to enter into this marriage with each other, believing that the love you share and your faith in each other will endure all things? (I am)

WITNESS AFFIRMATION

Edward and Sandra thank you who are here today as witnesses to the happiness that this couple has, and to the pledges they will make to each other for the mutual service of their common life. Are you Nicolas and Jennifer willing to serve as legal witnesses for the marriage of Edward and Sandra? If so, please say "We are".

VOWS

Please face each other and hold hands.

Edward and Sandra, the hand you hold is an extension of your self, just as is your mutual love. Cherish the touch, for you are holding not only your own, but another life. The hand now offered by each of you is a symbol of faith, both in each other, and the life you will lead. You are promising to love, comfort, honour and protect each other, for all the days of your lives to come.

VOWS

(repeated after Mary)

I have found the truest love with you.

And today I commit my life to yours.

I pledge to love for all time,

And to stay faithful and true to you.

I will comfort you in your pain,

And encourage you with your dreams.

As our journey through life begins today,

I promise to you that I will be forever by your side,

And I will be ready to face everything the world has to offer us.

THE RING CEREMONY

These rings are a circle, a symbol of the sun and the earth and the universe. A symbol of perfection and of peace, and the unity in which your lives are now joined.

It is a custom to exchange rings, as an outward symbol of the commitment you have just made, each to the other.

Would Andrew please bring the rings forward.

MARY: Sandra/Edward what wedding gift do you offer to each other in pledge of the vow you have made?" **RESPONSE:** "I offer you this ring"

MARY: Do you receive this ring in pledge of the same?" **RESPONSE:** "I do."

MARY: Place the ring on their finger saying:

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“With this ring, I take you into my heart as my husband/wife”

CHILD WELCOMING

Will Andrew please come forward and join us.

You, too, Andrew have entered this circle of love, where you will be sheltered and warmed until you are grown and you go to find your own world

Your parents, Sandra and Edward, will enfold you in their arms, and may their love strengthen and protect you - and may you return their love and affection many times over.

This family now stands joined together. Edward and Sandra have exchanged their promises and the signs of their commitment. They have pledged themselves to meet sorrow and joy as one family.

(if desired, family can pour 3 streams of coloured sand from 3 small vials into a glass jar, as a symbol of their joined, but distinct, lives)

FINAL DEDICATION

Mary steps back to stand with guests and offers this benediction:

And now, for all of you, from all of us gathered here:

May your home be a place of peace all who enter it.

May all who follow your lives with interest and affection have cause often to rejoice not only in their happiness, but in their brave and generous living.

IRISH FAMILY BLESSING

May love and laughter light your days

And warm your heart and home

May good and faithful friends be yours

Where-ever you may roam

May peace and plenty bless your world

With joy that long endures

May all life's passing seasons

Bring the best to you and yours. *(all repeat last line)*

or

The peace of the running water to you,

The peace of the flowing air to you,

The peace of the quiet earth to you,

The peace of the shining star to you,

And the love and the care of all of us to you. (all repeat last line)

KISS/EMBRACE

You may now kiss one another as a symbol of your love.

SIGNING OF THE MARRIAGE LICENSE

PRESENTATION

With the authority vested in me by the Province of Ontario, I now have the great honor to welcome the newly married couple Edward and Sandra.

And as the family stands together - let us all wish them happiness and joy.