

Couple Remarrying Each Other

The Bible says: If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

In Western society, just about everyone connects the concept of love with the concept of marriage. The two just go together in our minds. But even though love is a phenomenon we are exposed to from our earliest days, few of us are able to say exactly what comprises love, and what its obligations are. I want to talk about this now, because it is the exercise of loving that has brought you two here today, for a happy purpose.

Love is putting the well-being of another, ahead of your own. This is a universal definition of love among human, and can be applied to a wide variety of situations: husbands and wives; brothers and sisters; mothers and children. In fact, by this definition, we can even love our pets, our cars, and our countries. It is in marriage that our love for each other is tested daily, and sometimes harshly. In a healthy marriage, the act of loving often appears as compromise. We married couples spend a great deal of time talking back and forth, trying to work out solutions to little problems which will accommodate our needs and be beneficial to all concerned. In the course of these conversations, each of us sacrifices a tiny bit of our own momentary comfort in exchange for the extraordinary benefits of an intimate and enduring relationship — we give a little to get a lot, for a long time.

You have come here today, Michael and Jeannine, because you believe that by being together your lives will be better and more productive than they have been apart. In marriage a new perspective is created by the joining of male and female views of life and the world. Through this partnership, each partner becomes stronger, each becomes wiser, each becomes more loving. But marriage is a garden which needs to be tended every day: the benefits we receive through marriage are not free. If we don't make time to tell our partner how much we value what we have together, we will begin to take each other for granted and lose the very special quality that we originally united to enjoy.

The importance of marriage to humans is so great, that it is the oldest rite or ritual of any kind recorded in history; its scope so great that it is virtually the only custom recognized by every human government and religion. It is into this dynamic and wonderful state of partnership that you two come, today, to be joined.

In honor of the solemn pledge you are about to make, and symbolizing its unbroken perpetuity, please join right hands.

Michael/ Jeannine, do you take Jeannine/Michael to be your lawfully wedded wife/husband; to have and to hold from this day forward, for richer for poorer, in prosperity or adversity, to love and to cherish, so long as you both may live?

May I have the rings please, and join all your hands together.

Throughout human tradition, when you make a pledge, it has been deemed good to have a token to remind you of that pledge. For this purpose you have chosen rings. They are appropriate to the task because they are circles never ending, like the promises you make to each other today. And they are made of precious metal, never to be tarnished, like the love you express before myself and these witnesses. Please place these rings, and honor each other in their giving.

Repeat after me: I Michael/ Jeannine, take you Jeannine/Michael to be my wife/husband. I promise you love, honor and respect; to be faithful to you, and not to forsake you, until death us do part.

From this day forward, may you live together in peace; may you grow each day in understanding and compassion. When you are apart, may you return to one another in togetherness. May the home you establish be a place of sanctuary, where many will find a friend.

And what we have joined together, let no one put asunder.

Because you two came here today intending to marry. Because you joined hands and made solemn vows, and exchanged rings to remind you of those vows, and you are now joined as partners in mutual love and respect: according to the powers vested in me by the Territorial Court of the United States Virgin Islands, and the highest power of the land and the sea; I pronounce that your wedding vows are sealed and you may henceforth be known to all as husband and wife.

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