

The Wedding of Kim and Martial!

1. Invocation

Members of this community, friends and family, welcome. We have gathered here today to celebrate Kim and Martial, and their commitment to one another. I welcome you in the words of an old Scottish blessing:

Deep peace of the running wave to you
Deep peace of the flowing air to you
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you
Deep peace of the shining stars to you
Deep peace of the spirit of peace to you!

As we come together to create a community of spirit, united by our affection and love for Kim and for Martial, let us awaken to that which is sacred around us and within us, and let our presence be a blessing.

2. Candle-lighting

We light candles tonight to mark the sacred space of this ceremony.

[Rachel lights two candles; a third candle stands unlit between them.]

Martial and Kim, these two candles symbolize your separate lives. I ask that each of you take one of the lit candles and that together you light the center candle.

When your two flames come together, you create a new light that is more than the sum of its parts. Note that your individual candles continue to burn, even once you have lit the candle of your togetherness! Just so, in marriage you do not lose yourself, your uniqueness or individuality, but you create something beautiful and new that illuminates all of our lives.

And now I'd like to invite Kelly Cleland up to offer a reading.

3. A Reading

I love you,
Not only for what you are,
But for what I am
When I am with you.

I love you,
Not only for what
You have made of yourself,
But for what
You are making of me.

I love you
For the part of me
That you bring out;

I love you
For putting your hand
Into my heaped-up heart
And passing over
All the foolish, weak things
That you can't help
Dimly seeing there,
And for drawing out
Into the light
All the beautiful belongings
That no one else had looked
Quite far enough to find.

I love you because you
Are helping me to make
Of the lumber of my life
Not a tavern
But a temple;
Out of the works
Of my every day
Not a reproach
But a song.

I love you
Because you have done
More than any creed
Could have done
To make me good
And more than any fate
Could have done
To make me happy.
You have done it
Without a touch,
Without a word,
Without a sign.
You have done it
By being yourself.

— Roy Croft

4. Musical offering

[Schubert's Ave Maria]

5. Homily

Madeleine L'Engle, author of *A Wrinkle in Time*, has been married for a great many years. As a result, she has wise things to say about marriage. Marriage, for L'Engle, isn't just a blithe decision one might make on the spur of the moment. She feels strongly that a good marriage doesn't just arise out of thin air; it requires energy and intent and participation.

"To marry," L'Engle says, "is the biggest risk in human relations that a person can take. If we commit ourselves to one person for life this is not, as many people think, a rejection of freedom; rather it demands the courage to move into all the risks of freedom, and the risk of love which is permanent; into that love which is not possession, but participation. It takes a lifetime to learn another person. When love is not possession, but participation, then it is part of that co-creation which is our human calling."

When love is not possession but participation. When one person's love for another is not rooted in the need to own, to be in control, to call the shots, but is instead a natural flowering of the desire to be truly with someone else, to share oneself and one's heart. *Then* it is part of that co-creation which is our human calling—arguably the reason we are here, on this earth and in this life. In this sense, marriage is a profoundly spiritual act. It is one of the most important things we can do as human beings. It is a leap of faith.

Kim, when I asked you to describe Martial to me, you told me about your first date, and what a wonder it was to discover someone so eloquent and well-spoken (in two languages, no less!) You told me about sitting at that dinner table, after seeing *The Incredibles*, for hours just talking—until you realized they needed

to turn over the table, and moved to Starbucks, and kept talking. You told me about how loving and loyal Martial is, how generous with his time and energy. And you spoke about the joy of anticipating a lifetime together, the ordinary ups and downs of daily life made special by your togetherness.

And Martial, when I asked you to tell me about your relationship with Kim, you told me how quickly it became clear that she was “the one” for you. You described her as smart, spontaneous, both passionate and compassionate. Kim, you told me, balances your tendency to think about seventeen things at once. She helps turn your life from “cup half empty” to “cup half full.” You told me about the strength of her convictions, and how much you respect her brilliance. You told me that she makes your life complete, and that there is more to life when you are with her.

Generally when I officiate at weddings I offer blessings for the couple in question. But I’m not sure I can offer a greater blessing than what the two of you already have. Your love for one another is visible, strong, and enduring. What could be a greater blessing than your togetherness, for now and always?

I invite Kim and Martial and everyone present to pause for a moment. Take a deep breath. Feel what it feels like to be right here, right now. You will face challenges in your lifetime together; every couple does. But when you do, I hope you will be able to close your eyes, and remember this moment. Remember what drew you to covenant with one another. And find the perspective you need to make compassion out of frustration, and joy out of sorrow.

What you have together is worthy of celebration. May you always celebrate it, and each other, every day of the rest of your lives.

6. A Second Reading

I'd like to invite Virginie Ajot up to offer a second reading.

I Promise

I promise to give you the best of myself
and to ask of you no more than you can give.

I promise to respect you as your own person, and to realise that your interests,
desires and needs are no less important than my own.

I promise to share with you my time and my attention
and to bring joy, strength and imagination to our relationship.

I promise to keep myself open to you, to let you see through the window of my
world into my innermost fears and feelings, secrets and dreams.

I promise to grow along with you, to be willing to face changes in order to keep
our relationship alive and exciting.

I promise to love you in good times and in bad, with all I have to give and all I
feel inside in the only way I know how. Completely and forever.

—Dorothy R. Colgan

7. Community vow

All of us who are present today have a special role to play in the lives of Martial
and Kim. This is a question for everyone in the audience, and let me ask you to
let your voices ring forth at the appropriate moment! The response we're looking
for is "we will."

Rachel: Will you promise to support Kim and Martial, both as individuals and as
a family?

All: We will!

Rachel: Will you listen when they need to talk, offer support when they seek it, share in their path and their joys, and respect their commitment and the threshold of their home?
All: We will!

8. Rings/vows

MARTIAL'S VOWS

Je t'aime, Je t'adore, Je t'adule

Before meeting you, I never really knew Love.
Thanks to us meeting one another,
I now Love and I am in Love,
With you, Kim, Sweetheart.

Your love made my life perfect: You completed me.
You are my breath, my life, my heart, my everything.
The woman I like, love, and am in love with,
Today and for all of our tomorrows.

As I think back on my life,
I can not imagine being without you.
A few months ago, when I asked you the one question,
You brought tears to my eyes by saying "yes".

Today, I want to thank you, and celebrate our love.
I will no longer have to imagine my life without you.
You brought my dreams to reality.
Today and forever, let you and me become us.

Je t'aime, Je t'adore, Je t'adule

I, Martial, take you, Kimberly, to be no other than yourself: The love of my life.
I promise to love, cherish, honor and respect you forever.
I promise to hold you as my equal partner throughout all of our days.
To be yours in plenty and in want, to protect you, to treasure every moment of our life together.

I offer to you all that I am.
I will be proud to be your husband,
as I already am your soulmate.
I am in love with you today as I was yesterday and will always be.

These commitments I make in love, and promise to keep my whole life long.

Je t'aime, Je t'adore, Je t'adule ... Mon Amour.

[Rachel]

These rings are tokens of affection, love, and commitment, tangible reminders of an intangible connection between Martial and Kim, created by their friendship and strengthened by every day they share. May these rings always represent the blessing that each of you brings to the other's life.

[Martial, prompted by Rachel]

I join my life with yours today without hesitation. I give this ring to you as a pledge of my abiding love and commitment.

KIM'S VOWS

I love you for your generosity of spirit, your vibrant mind, your fierce loyalty, and your sense of fun. (And for being such a loving cat dad.)

I promise to cherish the life we are building together, and to seek balance between our individual hopes and desires.

I promise to support you in the challenges you face, and assist you in pursuing your dreams.

I promise to listen to you, and share the joy of your triumphs and the sorrow of your setbacks.

I promise to be faithful to you in thought, word, and deed.

I promise to care for you, both in the little details of daily life and through any hard times that may face us.

I promise to remember that we work best together, and to take both of our needs into account.

I will strive to create with you a home which celebrates laughter, friendship, compassion, tolerance, and love.

You bring out the best in me, and make me want to be better. I choose you to be my partner, friend, and life-long companion, and feel blessed that you choose me to be the same.

[Kim, prompted by Rachel]

I join my life with yours today without hesitation. I give this ring to you as a pledge of my abiding love and commitment.

9. Closing

It is time now to draw this ceremony to a close. As our being here is a blessing for Martial and for Kim, I would like to offer a blessing for all who are gathered:

May we be blessed in every way, from all directions and in all worlds.

May we be blessed with genuine connections that sustain our lives.

May we be blessed with challenges that spark growth, and with the resources to face them.

May we be blessed with a sense of connection to something greater than ourselves.

May we be blessed with communication, intellectual growth, and wisdom.

May we be blessed with harmony, vitality, creativity, and passion.

May we be blessed with understanding, and love, and with the flexibility to accept change.

May we know the certainty of feeling rooted in our lives and relationships, and may we be blessed with tenderness.

Michael: By the power vested in me by the State of Virginia and through the gathering of this community, I present to you this new husband and wife.

Rachel: Go forth and be joyful!