“Kathy and Mark Smith’s” Wedding

*In this sample, the names have been changed*

*At the request of the bride and groom*

May 25, 2013

Shedd Aquarium

Chicago, IL

**Wedding Ceremony**

**Musical Prelude/Procession**

**Welcome/Opening Words**

We are gathered here

to celebrate a marriage --

a union that embodies

love’s most profound possibilities.

This wedding ceremony does not mark

the start of a relationship,

but recognizes a bond that already exists.

Kathy and Mark, this ceremony

is the public ritual that formally represents

what the two of you have known

for a long time.

Your two lives have one future.

You meet here today as mature individuals,

comfortable with who you are,

and comfortable with the promises

you are about to make to one another.

So, take a deep breath.

Welcome to this moment in your lives.

Take a moment to look at one other.

Allow yourselves to relax and smile.

Trust and celebrate the love and commitment

that brings you both here today.

Welcome family and friends.

On behalf of Kathy and Mark,

thank you for joining us this evening.

The bride and groom are especially grateful

for the presence of family and friends

willing to travel this holiday weekend to be here today.

We also hold in our hearts

Mark’s paternal grandparents

who were not able to travel

from the Phillipines to join us.

May we feel their loving presence here with us tonight.

(PAUSE)

A wedding is never about just the bride and groom.

It also includes everyone who has played a role

in the journey that has led this couple

to this point of commitment.

As family and friends,

your presence is symbolic of the larger community

who surrounds this couple,

so – stay tuned -- I will invite you to participate

later on in this ceremony

as part of your ongoing love and support

of Kathy and Mark.

(PAUSE)

Marriage can be seen as many things:

it is a domestic arrangement

as old as time itself,

a supportive partnership,

and a deep emotional bonding.

Marriage is a rich environment

in which love can grow.

A place where we learn

to risk more than we have ever risked before,

knowing that we are allowed to make mistakes,

allowed to be less than perfect,

allowed to try again to get things right.

We come to know ourselves in new ways.

We discover, through marriage,

the breadth and span of our own capacity to love another.

Marriage is transforming.

You will both change in

remarkable and unexpected ways.

You will change in ways

you have planned

and also transform in ways

you had neither hoped, nor imagined.

Love has brought you here

to this unique person, standing before you today.

Your partner will inspire you,

encourage you,

and yes, sometimes irritate you

towards the development of your highest, best self.

You will learn to be kinder, gentler

and more empathetic.

You will learn to be more trusting,

more generous and compassionate.

Entering into marriage is a statement of faith –

faith in yourself and in one another.

Faith that your love will grow

and mature and endure

because you are both determined

to make it do so.

Stand fast in your resolve,

in your confidence in one another,

and in the love you share.

May your partnership grow, strengthen

and sustain you all the days of your lives.

**The Readings**

Reading by Kim Pettig

*Excerpt from The Velveteen Rabbit*

*by Margery Williams*

Reading by Caesar Lomahan

*"To Love is Not to Possess"*

*by James Kavanaugh*

**The Question of Intent**

The meaning of marriage

begins in the giving of words.

You cannot be joined together

without giving your word to one another.

Let us begin with each of you

declaring your intent to be married.

This is the “I do” part.

Kathy,

do you come here of your own free will,

to have this man to be your husband;

to live together in the covenant of marriage?

Will you love him, comfort him,

honor and keep him, in sickness and in health;

and, forsaking all others,

be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

If so, please answer, “I do.”

*Kathy answers*: I do.

Mark,

do you come here of your own free will,

to have this woman to be your wife;

to live together in the covenant of marriage?

Will you love her, comfort her,

honor and keep her, in sickness and in health;

and, forsaking all others,

be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

If so, please answer, “I do.”

*Mark answers*: I do.

Please turn now

and face one another and join hands,

and in doing so, join your hearts together as well.

**Exchange of Vows and Rings**

May I have the rings please? (*Best Man Connor*)

A ring is a symbol of unity.

These rings, made of precious metal,

will endure forever.

Their round shape symbolizes

a circle unbroken without beginning or end.

Kathy and Mark,

as you wear these rings,

let them be an enduring symbol

of your love and your promise to one another,

to create a marriage that is whole and unbroken,

a partnership to encourage and nurture one another,

a partnership to last a lifetime.

Mark,

please take this ring,

place it on Kathy’s finger, and pledge your vow

of love and commitment to her:

*Hand Mark card*

*NOTE: Both bride & groom wrote their own vows*

*on note cards,*

*Which I held and gave to them*

*At this place in the ceremony*

Kathy,

please take this ring,

place it on Mark’s finger, and pledge your vow

of love and commitment to him:

*Hand Kathy her notecard*

And now,

I turn to this community

of gathered family and friends.

Remember I said you’d get to have a part

in the ceremony?

Well, here it is.

You’re going to say a vow, too –

a vow to the bride and groom.

Kathy and Mark

have asked you here

to be their witnesses

as they pledge their love and devotion

to one another.

But no relationship begins or grows

in a vacuum.

You represent the larger community

of family and friends

who have helped to nurture, support

and advise this couple.

Kathy and Mark

ask for your continued love and support

as they begin their new life together

as wife and husband.

Therefore, family and friends,

do you promise to continue to support and guide this couple

in their marriage to one another?

Please indicate your vow of support by saying together, “We do.”

**A Blessing Ritual of Veil, Cord and Coin**

Today’s blessings will involve a traditional Filipino ritual using a veil, cord and coins.

I am going to ask our sponsors to come forward

And help place two chairs

for Kathy and Mark to be seated for these blessings.

The first blessing begins with a veil.

The white veil is a symbol of purity.

*Sponsors begin to place veil.*

Its original meaning was the symbol

of the presence of God,

as the cloud was a symbol of divine presence.

It is placed over the shoulders of Mark and Kathy

to symbolize their union

and being "clothed as one" in unity.

(PAUSE TO LET PLACEMENT OF VEIL FINISH,

AND LET CORD SPONSORS COME UP)

And now, may the cord sponsors please come forward.

*Sponsors begin to place cord*

The cord is a symbol of Kathy and Mark’s bond.

It reminds them,

they are no longer two,

but one in their new life together.

(PAUSE TO ALLOW FOR PLACEMENT OF CORD TO FINISH,

FOR COIN SPONSORS TO COME UP)

And now, may the coin sponsors please come forward.

*Sponsors hand groom coins*

The Wedding Coins symbolize the prosperity

that will be shared by the new couple.

In times past, it symbolized a man’s ability

to provide for his wife and family.

*Mark hands coins to Kathy*

However, today, the coins symbolize

a couple's commitment to contribute mutually

to their relationship, their children, and to their community.

*Kathy hands coins back to Mark, who hands to coin sponsor*

**Prayer of Blessing**

I invite you now

into the spirit of blessing for the couple.

Spirit of life, Spirit of love,

bless all who are gathered here.

We ask for blessings for Kathy and Mark,

today and every day,

as they enter joyfully into

their shared life together as husband and wife.

Let the love of family and friends surround them

and may our collective prayers bless and sanctify

the sacredness of this wedded union, now and always.

Blessed be.

*Cord sponsors remove the cord*

*Veil sponsors remove the veil*

*Veil sponsors remove the chairs*

*All sponsors sit down*

**The Pronouncement**

And now, we get to the part of the ceremony

Every one has been waiting for.

Kathy and Mark,

as you have openly and honestly

pledged yourselves to one another

in the covenant of marriage

before all those gathered here,

By the power vested in me by the State of Illinois,

It is my honor and privilege,

To now pronounce you husband and wife.

Mark, you may kiss your beautiful bride!

Family and friends,

I now present

for the very first time,

Mark and Kathy Smith,

As husband and wife.

**Music/Recessional**

The bride and groom recess down an aisle, towards wherever you intend to stage yourself or loop back around for photos.

**Closing Announcement**

Family and friends,

this concludes our wedding ceremony.

Wedding guests are invited now

To exit through the doors on the right

To begin the reception celebration

in the North Lobby & Terrace.

We need to clear the auditorium

So the bride and groom, the wedding party,

Their sponsors and immediate family

Can take wedding photos.

They will join us in the North Lobby & Terrace

As soon as they are done!

Gretchen Weis

Minister Intern

713-385-8912

gweis@gweis.com