

# *Weddings In Paradise™*

## *Religious Christian Ceremony*

### (Opening Statement)

As we begin, I'd like you to be aware of your surroundings. You've chosen a very special place to get married, and in the excitement of the moment, I wouldn't want you to miss the beauty of the location.

### (Gathering)

Dearly Beloved, we are gathered together in the sight of God to join this man and this woman in marriage. Let all who enter it know that marriage is a sacred and joyous covenant, a way of life ordained of God from the beginning of his creation. "For this reason" says our Lord, "a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder." Marriage is also compared by the apostle Paul to the mystical union between Christ and his church. Therefore, it should not be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, considering the purpose for which it was ordained.

God has ordered the covenant of marriage: that husband and wife may give to each other companionship, help, and comfort, both in prosperity and in adversity; that he may hallow the expression of the natural affections; that children may be born and nurtured in families and trained in godliness; and that human society may stand on firm foundations. Into this sacred covenant these two persons now desire to enter. Let us therefor invoke the blessing of God on the union now to be formed.

### (Opening Prayer)

Oh gracious and ever-living God, you have created us male and female in your image. Look mercifully upon this man and this woman who come to you seeking your blessing, and assist them with your grace that with true fidelity and steadfast love they may honor and keep the promises and vows they make; through Jesus Christ our savior, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### (Charge to the Couple)

(Groom) and (bride), your marriage is intended to join you for life in a relationship so intimate and personal that it will change your whole being. It offers you the hope, and indeed the promise, of a love that is true and mature.

To attain such love you will have to commit yourselves to each other freely and gladly for the sake of a richer and deeper life together. Let God be your guide and helper. Constant and continuous obedience to your vow will result in a marriage which will be blessed, a home which will be a place of peace, and a relationship in which you both grow in love.

(Reading 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians Chap. 13 v. 1-8)

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 faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body to be burned, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. Love bears all things, hopes all things, believes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

(Declaration of Consent)

(Groom), will you have this woman to be your wife, and be faithful to her alone?

(Bride), will you have this man to be your husband, and be faithful to him alone?

(Vows)

I, (groom), take you (bride), to be my wedded wife. To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better or worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, and there I pledge myself, truly, with all my heart.

I (bride), take you (groom), to be my wedded husband. To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better or worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, and there I pledge myself, truly, with all my heart.

(Exchange of Rings)

Bless O Lord, the giving of these rings that they who wear them may live in your peace, and continue in your favor all the days of their life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen

(Groom places ring on brides finger and repeats) “I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.”

(Bride places ring on grooms finger and repeats) “I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.”

(Prayer)

Let us pray: Eternal God, creator and preserver of all life, author of salvation, and giver of all grace: Look with favor upon the world you have made, and for which your Son gave his life, and especially upon this man and this woman whom you make one flesh in Holy Matrimony.

Give them wisdom and devotion in the ordering of their common life, that each may be to the other a strength in need, a councilor in perplexity, a comfort in sorrow, and a companion in joy.

Grant that their wills may be so knit together in your will, and their spirits in your Spirit, that they may grow in love and peace with you and one another all the days of their lives. Give them grace, when they hurt each other, to recognize and acknowledge their fault, and to seek each other’s forgiveness and yours.

Make their life together a sign of Christ’s love to this sinful and broken world, that unity may overcome estrangement, forgiveness heal guilt, and joy conquer despair

Bestow on them, if it is your will , the gift and heritage of children , and the grace to bring them up to know you, to love you, and serve you.

Give them such fulfillment of their mutual affection that they may reach out in love and concern for others.

Grant that all married persons who have witnessed these vows may find their lives strengthened and their loyalties confirmed.

Grant that the bonds of our common humanity, by which all your children are united one to another, and the living to the dead, may be so transformed by your grace, that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven: where, O Father, with your Son and the Holy Spirit, you live and reign in perfect unity , now and for ever. Amen

(Declaration of Marriage)

Having heard your vows to each other, witnessed by God and these persons here present, by the power vested in me by the Territorial Court of the United States Virgin Islands, but more importantly by the Highest Power that rules the land and the seas, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

(Kiss and Presentation of the Couple)