

A Secular Gay Wedding Ceremony Script

Knot Note: Some names and information have been redacted for the couple's privacy

Introduction

Good evening everybody. Welcome to New York. Welcome to the Michelangelo Hotel, and welcome to the wedding of Groom and Groom. All of you look terrific. My name is Christopher Shelley. I am a New York State Wedding Officiant, and a Life-Cycle Celebrant. It is my honor to be officiating this wedding. Before we begin, please turn the volume of your phones up as high as possible, so that when somebody gets a phone call during the ceremony we all know whom to blame. Alternatively, please silence your phones. The ceremony is about to begin.

Processional

CELEBRANT

Please rise to meet our happy couple.

You may be seated, thank you.

Welcome

Welcome everybody. We are thrilled that so many of you could make it here today. One of the wonderful things about a wedding is that it also serves as a multi-family reunion, and it always pleases me to learn how far people are willing to travel to be here on a day like this, for an event like this, which just goes to show you how important it is to mark these happy transitions in our lives. We have guests here today from Connecticut, Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan Pennsylvania and New York. Welcome! Joe and Michael thank you for traveling here today.

Honor Parents

Groom and Groom would like to acknowledge the spiritual presence of some people who meant a great deal to them. Groom and Groom are very happy to finally have the privilege of being legally married after 20 years of being together, and they deeply regret that their parents are not physically here today to join the celebration. Michael never had the opportunity to know Groom's parents, but Joe had the privilege of knowing Groom's parents, who were so very warm and welcoming from the first time that they met. They immediately made him feel like a part of the family, a role which was easy for him to assume since he grew up in a Sicilian family himself.

Reading

Groom and Groom have asked that I read this excerpt from Plato's Symposium. So I will.

Plato's Symposium Excerpt

Love is our best friend, our helper, and the healer of the ills that prevent us from being happy.

To understand the power of love, we must understand that our original human nature was not like it is now, but different. Human beings each had two sets of arms, two sets of legs, and two faces looking in opposite directions. There were three sexes then: one comprised of two men called the children of the Sun, one made of two women called the children of the Earth, and a third made of a man and a woman, called the children of the Moon. Due to the power and might of these original humans, the Gods began to fear that their reign might be threatened. They sought for a way to end the humans' insolence without destroying them.

It was at this point that Zeus divided the humans in half. Each of us when separated, having one side only, is but the indenture of a person, and we are always looking for our other half. Those whose original nature lies with the children of the Sun are men who are drawn to other men, those from the children of the Earth are women who love other women, and those from the children of the Moon are men and women drawn to one another. And when one of us meets our other half, we are lost in an amazement of love and friendship and intimacy, and would not be out of the other's sight even for a moment. We pass our whole lives together, desiring that we should be melted into one, to spend our lives as one person instead of two, and so that after our death there will be one departed soul instead of two; this is the very expression of our ancient need. And the reason is that human nature was originally one and we were a whole, and the desire and pursuit of the whole is called Love.

It all began when Groom held the door open for Groom at the fundraiser, as they saw each other for the first time. Groom and Groom, do you remember that very moment? Groom, can you still feel the weight of the door in your hand. Groom, can you remember the pleasure of a suddenly open door? Both of you, do you remember what you wore? What the weather was like? Was it dark? Were there other sounds? Both of you, can you remember the very sight of each other, the sounds of each other's voices hitting your ears for the first time? Did you ever dream it would lead to a day like this? Can you believe it? It's real. It's happening. It's even more marvelous than you've ever dreamed.

Please face each other and take each other's hands so that you may see the gift that they are to you.

These are the hands of your best friend, strong and full of love for you, that are holding yours on your wedding day as you promise to love each other today, tomorrow and forever.

These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years,

and with the slightest touch will comfort you like no other.

These are the hands that will give you strength when you need it, support and encouragement to pursue your dreams, and comfort in difficult times. And lastly, these are the hands that even years from now will still be reaching for yours, still giving you the same unspoken tenderness with just one touch.

Hawaiian Wedding Prayer

Groom and Groom have chosen to read an ancient Hawaiian wedding prayer which they think captures how they feel. It's from another time and culture but like the Plato's Symposium reading is a remarkable expression of the meaning of human love.

Groom

Before we met, you and I were halves unjoined except in the wide rivers of our minds. We were each other's distant shore, the opposite wings of a bird, the other half of a seashell. We did not know the other then, did not know our determination to keep alive the cry of one riverbank to the other. We were apart, yet connected in our ignorance of each other, like two apples sharing a common tree. Remember?

Groom

I knew you existed long before you understood my desire to join my freedom to yours. Our paths collided long enough for our indecision to be swallowed up by the greater need of love. When you came to me, the sun surged towards the earth and the moon escaped from darkness to bless the union of two spirits, so alike that the creator had designed them for life's endless circle.

Grooms Together

Beloved partner, keeper of my heart's odd secrets, clothed in summer blossoms so the icy hand of winter never touches us. I thank you for your patience. Our joining is like a tree to earth, a cloud to sky and even more. We are the reason the world can laugh on its battlefields and rise from the ashes of its selfishness to hear me say, in this time, this place, this way – I love you best of all.

Ring Exchange

Wedding rings are a symbol of commitment and love. The rings are circular, like their love, with no beginning and no end. They represent what has been and what will always be. They are made of solid, sturdy material which is meant to survive years and years of hand-holding, washing dishes, swimming, tennis and tender caresses. Couples wear their wedding rings every day as a symbol of their love.

Ring Bearer, please bring us the rings, thank you.

[Groom], you will go first. Please place [Groom]'s ring on the tip of his ring finger and repeat after me.

Celebrant/Groom (repeating)

I love you/ My heart is in this ring/My love is in this ring/I promise to be your faithful husband/to love you through the best and the worst/through the difficult and the easy/ I promise you my unconditional love/and I give you my unwavering trust/when you look at this ring/remember that I love you always.

Celebrant

You may slide the ring all the way onto his finger

Groom, it's your turn.

Celebrant/Groom (repeating)

Groom/Thank you for my beautiful ring/I love you/ My heart is in this ring/My love is in this ring/I promise to be your faithful husband/to love you through the best and the worst/through the difficult and the easy/ I promise you my unconditional love/and I give you my unwavering trust/when you look at this ring/remember that I love you always.

Pronouncement and Kiss

I asked both [Groom] and [Groom] to sum up their relationship in one word. I can honestly say that for the first time in my history of doing weddings and asking couples this question, they both used the same word: love. Tonight is all about love. It has been my honor to officiate your ceremony this evening. And now I get to say something you've been looking forward to hearing for a long time. By the powers vested in me by the State of New York, I now pronounce you married. You may kiss your husband.

Recessional

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