

THE PREFACE

We have come together in the presence of God, to witness the marriage of Tom and Jess, to ask his blessing on them, and to share in their joy. Our Lord Jesus Christ was himself a guest at a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and through his Spirit he is with us now.

The Bible teaches us that marriage is a gift of God in creation and a means of his grace, a holy mystery in which man and woman become one flesh. It is God's purpose that, as husband and wife give themselves to each other in love throughout their lives, they shall be united in that love as Christ is united with his Church.

Marriage is given, that husband and wife may comfort and help each other, living faithfully together in need and in plenty, in sorrow and in joy. It is given, that with delight and tenderness they may know each other in love, and, through the joy of their bodily union, may strengthen the union of their hearts and lives. It is given as the foundation of family life in which children may be born and nurtured in accordance with God's will, to his praise and glory.

In marriage husband and wife belong to one another, and they begin a new life together in the community. It is a way of life that all should honour; and it must not be undertaken carelessly, lightly, or selfishly, but reverently, responsibly, and after serious thought.

This is the way of life, created and hallowed by God, that Tom and Jess are now to begin. They will each give their consent to the other; they will join hands and exchange solemn vows, and in token of this they will each give and receive a ring.

Therefore, on this their wedding day we pray with them, that, strengthened and guided by God, they may fulfil his purpose for the whole of their earthly life together.

THE DECLARATION

The minister says to the congregation:

First, I am required to ask anyone present who knows a reason why these persons may not lawfully marry, to declare it now.

The minister says to the couple:

The vows you are about to take are to be made in the presence of God, who is judge of all and knows all the secrets of our hearts; therefore, if either of you knows a reason why you may not lawfully marry, you must declare it now.

The minister says to the bridegroom:

Thomas Oliver James, will you take Jessica Frances Gray to be your wife? Will you love her, comfort her, honour and protect her, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

He answers:

I will.

The minister says to the bride:

Jessica Frances Gray, will you take Thomas Oliver James to be your husband? Will you love him, comfort him, honour and protect him, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

She answers:

I will.

The minister says to the congregation:

Will you, the families and friends of Tom and Jess, support and uphold them in their marriage now and in the years to come?

All: We will.

THE COLLECT

God our Father, from the beginning you have blessed creation with abundant life.

Pour out your blessings upon Tom and Jess, that they may be joined in mutual love and companionship, in holiness and commitment to each other.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

All: Amen.

FIRST READING

A Lovely Love Story - Edward Monkton

Read by Sam and Rhea Barrett

SECOND READING

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Read by Will Bridge

SERMON

Reverend Dick Woodger

HYMN

I vow to thee, my country, all earthly things above,
Entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love;
The love that asks no questions, the love that stands the test,
That lays upon the altar the dearest and the best;
The love that never falters, the love that pays the price,
The love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice.

And there's another country, I've heard of long ago,
Most dear to them that love her, most great to them that know;
We may not count her armies, we may not see her King;
Her fortress is a faithful heart, her pride is suffering;
And soul by soul and silently her shining bounds increase,
And her ways are ways of gentleness, and all her paths are peace.

THE MARRIAGE

Tom and Jess, I now invite you to join hands and make your vows, in the presence of God and his people.

The bride and bridegroom face each other.

The bridegroom takes the bride's right hand in his, and says:

I, Thomas Oliver James, take you, Jessica Frances Gray, to be my wife,
to have and to hold from this day forward;
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till death do us part;
according to God's holy law.
In the presence of God I make this vow.

The bride takes the bridegroom's right hand in hers, and says:

I, Jessica Frances Gray, take you, Thomas Oliver James, to be my husband,
to have and to hold from this day forward;
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till death do us part;
according to God's holy law.
In the presence of God I make this vow.

THE GIVING OF RINGS

Heavenly Father, by your blessing
let these rings be to Tom and Jess
a symbol of unending love and faithfulness,
to remind them of the vow and covenant
which they have made this day
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

***The bridegroom places the ring on the fourth finger of the
bride's left hand and, holding it there, says:***

Jess, I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The bride places a ring on the fourth finger of the bridegroom's left hand and, holding it there, says:

Tom, I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

THE PROCLAMATION

In the presence of God, and before this congregation, Tom and Jess have given their consent and made their marriage vows to each other. They have declared their marriage by the joining of hands and by the giving and receiving of rings.

I therefore proclaim that they are husband and wife.

The minister joins their right hands together and says:
Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.

THE BLESSING OF THE MARRIAGE

God the Father,
God the Son,
God the Holy Spirit,
bless, preserve and keep you;
the Lord mercifully grant you the riches of his grace,
that you may please him both in body and soul,
and, living together in faith and love,
may receive the blessings of eternal life.

All: Amen.

THE REGISTRATION OF THE MARRIAGE

Can't Help Falling in Love - Elvis Presley
One Day More - Les Miserables
Sung by the Cheltenham Pub Choir

THE PRAYERS

Faithful God,
holy and eternal,
source of life and spring of love,
we thank and praise you for bringing Tom and Jess to this day,
and we pray for them.
Lord of life and love:

All: Hear our prayer.

May their marriage be life-giving and life-long,
enriched by your presence and strengthened by your grace;
may they bring comfort and confidence to each other
in faithfulness and trust.
Lord of life and love:

All: Hear our prayer.

May the hospitality of their home
bring refreshment and joy to all around them;
may their love overflow to neighbours in need
and embrace those in distress.
Lord of life and love:

All: Hear our prayer.

May they discern in your word
order and purpose for their lives;
and may the power of your Holy Spirit
lead them in truth and defend them in adversity.
Lord of life and love:

All: Hear our prayer.

May they nurture their family with devotion,
see their children grow in body, mind and spirit
and come at last to the end of their lives
with hearts content and in joyful anticipation of heaven.
Lord of life and love:

All: Hear our prayer.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed by thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.