

The Wedding Ceremony of Claudia Riccardi and Todd Holloway 8 September 2002

Greeting:

We are here today to celebrate the marriage of Claudia and Todd. They ask for your blessing, encouragement and support for their decision to become husband and wife. They are delighted that you have chosen to witness this celebration, the most sacred of unions between a man and a woman.

This wedding is a public recognition of a private relationship. This service is not magic. It will not create intimacy that does not already exist. Nothing we do today makes this relationship more real than what is already in Todd and Claudia's hearts. It symbolizes tying a knot between the ropes of their lives and saying, "We will not slip backwards from here, but will go forward together."

Claudia and Todd, what we do today builds a sanctuary. Life offers no safe haven from good times or bad, wealth or poverty, sickness or health. But your marriage confirms your love and trust for each other, your promise to be present when your partner is hurting, your promise to be present when *you* are hurting. Marriage is a sanctuary safe enough to risk loving and sharing your lives together.

Reading:

Shakespeare Sonnet 115:

*Those lines that I before have writ do lie,
Even those that said I could not love you dearer:
Yet then my judgment knew no reason why
My most full flame should afterwards burn clearer.
But reckoning Time, whose million'd accidents
Creep in 'twixt vows, and change decrees of kings,
Tan sacred beauty, blunt the sharp'st intents,
Divert strong minds to the course of altering things;
Alas! why, fearing of Time's tyranny,
Might I not then say, 'Now I love you best,'
When I was certain o'er uncertainty,
Crowning the present, doubting of the rest?
Love is a babe, then might I not say so,
To give full growth to that which still doth grow?*

Shakespeare Sonnet 116:
*Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.*

Vows:

From the first day I loved you, I, Claudia, take you, Todd, as my best friend and life partner.

From the first day I loved you, I, Todd, take you, Claudia as my best friend and life partner.

C: I will cherish, encourage, and support you through your natural personal evolution.

T: I promise never to make unwarranted assumptions, but to remain humbly curious about your likes and needs, and to continue loving and accepting you for who you are, and need to be.

C: I pledge to strive to keep the flow of communication between us going at all times; and I vow a steadfast commitment to you in the face of inevitable difficulties and hard times.

T: I pledge to work hard toward the expedient resolution of any momentary misunderstandings between us, and to do my part in keeping our relationship vibrant and alive.

C & T together: Above all, I pledge to exercise patience, and humility, to fight against unwarranted feelings of entitlement, to watch out against the dangers of self-complacency and habit, and to remain giving towards you, without expecting

anything in return. These, and the requirement that you obey my every injunction blindly, are my solemn vows.

Blessing of the Rings:

These rings, given and worn in love, are a testimony to all who see them that Claudia and Todd are truly joined. Circles represent eternity. Though our lives are finite, love is everlasting. Love is the creative force that binds us together, the force that gives us life.

Blessed be these rings with the gifts of Air: communication of the heart, mind and body. Fresh beginnings with each rising of the Sun. May you know the growth to be found in shared silence.

Blessed be these rings with the gifts of Fire: warmth of the hearth and home, heat of the heart's passion. May the light you create brighten your darkest nights.

Blessed be these rings with the gifts of Water: the deep, quiet commitment of the lake, the swift laughter of a river, the refreshing cleansing of rain, the eternal heartbeat of the sea. May the compassion you share lighten the inevitable pains of life.

Blessed be these rings with the gifts of Earth: a solid foundation to build a home, fertile ground to nourish you. May the strength you've found in your individual pasts sustain you as you move into the future.

May this marriage have a gracious face and a good name, an omen as welcome as the moon in a clear daylight sky.

Pronouncement:

According to the power vested in me by the State of California, I now pronounce you wife and husband. Claudia, you may now kiss your groom.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have run out of words to describe how spirit mingles in this marriage. I present Claudia and Todd Holloway.