

CHRISTIAN CEREMONY

KIRSTEN & TONY STEWART'S WEDDING

Rev.M. Maureen Killoran, officiant

May 7, 2005

It is one of life's richest gifts when the meeting of two life journeys leads them on a common path, and it is one of life's finest blessings when friendship grows into a bond of love. This meeting and this growth bring us here today. I invite you to pause for a moment's silence, that our hearts may welcome the two special people who stand before us to exchange one of life's deepest vows.

Dearly beloved: We have come together in the presence of God and this company to bless the joining of these two people. The union of husband and wife in heart, body and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and for the creation of a family. Into this holy union_Tony and Kirsten now come to be joined. Let us rejoice and be glad.

PRAYER - At this special time, we are most aware of the Spirit of Life that connects us in an intimate web with friends, family, all those whose lives touch, have touched, will touch our own. Let us take a moment to think of the ways our lives have been enriched, our hearts challenged, by those we know and have known, some of whom are here today. Without the nourishment of love, the challenge of struggle, we would not be sustained in a world that is too much with us. Feel that sustenance. Know that you have grown from challenge. Give thanks for this, the action of God, in your heart and in the world. I invite you now, using your own quiet language of inner prayer, take this moment to wish Kirsten and Tony and Kirsten a lifelong union of harmony and growth.

Kirsten and Tony, today you take the step of consecrating the very special relationship you have been building . . . and in this step you change forever the direction of your individual life paths. Think for a moment what it means to have another person come to you with their heart open, to have them say, I trust you with all of me that is fragile, all that is vulnerable, all that is hoping and longing and not-yet-known. Here . . . it is as though this other person extends their hands and says, "Here, I give my essence into your keeping. I trust you to cherish me and to love me . . . and I promise to do the same for you."

There can be no greater gift. Respect the gift that you receive this day Do your best to honor it consistently over time. And when you stumble – for you will – hold fast to the spirit of the vows you will exchange here. Let them be ever renewing, ever new, as your union continues to grow and change throughout the unfolding of your lives.

Cherish the blessing that is your love. Honor the gift that is the trust you show one for the other as you literally place your life into your loved one's hands. I pray that as your marriage unfolds you will come to each day with love and devotion in your hearts. That laughter and joy will always reside in your home.

Now -- I ask you here in this time that is so special, and this place where so much of life has cast its spell, is there in your heart any sign of reservation? Can you say in the presence of all that is holy, words to weave your life together from this day forth until the end of time? I ask you to make that promise now with words from the Song of Solomon: *(couple repeats these words)*

***I HAVE FOUND THE ONE
WHOM MY SOUL LOVES.***

In the eyes of the law, marriage is a contract whereby the couple enters into a union for companionship and support.

In the hearts of the human community, marriage is a public expression of possibility and hope – the possibility of human love and the hope for a better world.

In the wisdom of Spirit, marriage is an inner union, weaving two souls more deeply into the universal web of wholeness and peace.

It is from all these contexts that these two people now speak their truth to one another.

TONY SAYS:

*I take you, Kirsten, to be my wife,
to laugh with you in joy,
to grieve with you in sorrow,
to grow with you in love,
to strengthen the world by the strength of our bond,
as long as we both shall live.*

KIRSTEN SAYS:

*I take you, Tony to be my husband
to laugh with you in joy,
to grieve with you in sorrow,
to grow with you in love,
to strengthen the world by the strength of our bond,
as long as we both shall live.*

The Minister asks – What symbol do you offer in honor of this marriage? (Bride and groom have rings)

The connecting of two solitudes is one of the blessings of the cycle of growth, the creating and recreating of boundaries. In exchanging these rings, you symbolize your gratitude for the old boundaries that defined your unique individuality, even as you create a new shared boundary with your love.

Minister: By the love with which these rings are given and received, so indeed shall they be blessed.

TONY *With this ring I thee wed,
and with it I pledge
my honor, my love and my life.*

KIRSTEN: *With all that I am,
and all that I have,
I honor you.*

From THE VELVETEEN RABBIT:

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender. "Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When somebody loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with but REALLY loves you, then you become REAL."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit? "Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt." "Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," Rabbit asked, "or bit by bit?" "It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept.

"Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand." (*From The Velveteen Rabbit by Margery Williams*)

This moment is made sacred by your courage.
This ritual is blessed by your love.
The time for ceremony has ended.
The time for living your commitment has begun.
Therefore, Kirsten and Tony,
it is with great joy that I proclaim
in the presence of God and before your family and friends,
that you are well and truly wed!

May God bless and keep you.
May God's presence shine upon you
be gracious unto you
and walk with you in peace.

KISS!!