

*Note: This ceremony was personally written by myself and the couple- it was my first truly custom ceremony. The wedding took place in a beautiful park, with the river as the backdrop. The bride's family ( who is extraordinarily talented vocally!!) honored us with singing "As I Went Down to the River to Pray". The Bride's mother started singing, and at each new part of the song, another family member would join in, until at last we were all singing. It was amazingly meaningful and touching.*

### **Commencement**

Welcome! Welcome to the celebration of the intimate affair of Betany and Joseph's wedding. Today we take part in the opportunity to share Joseph and Betany's happiness, and their desire to commit to putting up with each other for the rest of their lives!

You have been invited today because you are the people—the friends and family-- that are most important to Joseph and Betany. You are here to witness Betany and Joseph's journey of love and friendship; from their beginning as a good team, to their future as husband and wife. You are here to give confirmation and support in this couple's decision to wed.

As you have gathered here in support, we hope that you hear a message of commitment, hope, and honesty today. We hope that you enjoy the ceremony and have a good time. We hope that the married couples in the audience will be reminded of falling in love, and that you will silently renew your commitment to one another. And we hope that the unmarried guests will see something in Betany and Joseph's relationship that will help them to recognize the difference between just "being in love" and actually finding someone that is right for you-- at a time in your life when you are ready for them. Because any fool can fall in love; but it takes something much deeper to make a lifelong commitment.

### **Solo**

I would like now to introduce a friend of Betany & Joseph's: Nicole Taylor, who will be singing "*Ah Chloris*". This song will be sung in French, but has been translated into English for you in your program.

### **Address**

Many of you already know how Joseph and Betany met. For those of you who don't, I would like to share that story with you now.

Joseph and Betany's brother, Matt (*point out Matt*), have known each other for about 7 years; they studied together in Germany. Some time later, Joseph was studying in Amsterdam and Matt was still in Germany. One night in a dark student bar, Matt met Abigail from England (*point out Abigail*). Matt and Abigail dated for some time and decided to marry. Then Matt made the fatal mistake of inviting Joseph to their wedding in England. Joseph took the boat over from Amsterdam and came back with Matt's sister Betany. Yet, truth be told, the full blame can be placed squarely upon Matt's shoulders because before pursuing anything with Joseph, Betany asked her brother if Joseph could be trusted. After a long pause and a lot of sighing Matt reluctantly said "yeah." So with her brother's approval, Betany knew that Joseph could be trusted with her heart.

Perhaps she wooed him with her beautiful voice when she sang at Matt's wedding ceremony. She noticed immediately how attractive Joseph was, with his warm, honest smile. When he met

her at the airport in Amsterdam, he greeted her with two dozen roses and held her hand on the train into the city. She fell for his ease and confidence in their relationship. She soon knew that she wanted to marry him...

Betany and Joseph, we know you can't imagine not being together. That is how you have come to this point in your lives, when you now choose each other above all others. You agree on the most fundamental issues. You both have the motivation to better yourselves personally, morally, and in your future together. You respect each other's careers, goals, and your differences.

In some ways, you will wake up tomorrow and feel that nothing has changed. You will not suddenly be different people tomorrow, and you will not suddenly love each other any more than you do now. But in other ways, everything will be different because you have now made a public statement about your commitment to one another, and pledged each other the rest of your lives.

In promising always in a relationship, we promise each other time. We promise to exercise our love, to stretch it large enough to embrace the unforeseen realities of the future. We promise to learn to love beyond the level of our instincts and inclinations, to love in foul weather as well as good, in hard times as well as when we are exhilarated by the pleasures of romance.

We change because of these promises. We shape ourselves according to them; we live in their midst and live differently because of them. We feel protected because of them. We try some things and resist trying others because, having promised, we feel secure. Marriage, the bond, makes us free—to see, to be, to love. Our souls are protected; our hearts have come home.

### Vows

**Betany:** Joseph, I promise you patience above all else; patience with myself, with you, our love, our differences, our past and our future. I promise that even if I can be difficult once in a while, I will never intentionally disrespect or hurt you. I promise to remember and respect that you are a very focused person- and that it may be tough to get your attention at times. I promise to give you snuggle time. I promise to be independent enough not to depend on you for all my needs. I promise to be an understanding, loving and loyal wife. I hope to give you a reason to love, a reason to smile, a reason to laugh, and a reason to think. I promise to be inspired by my parents (who have been married for 37 years) and I look forward to that kind of familiarity, commitment, and mutual understanding that I will share with you in the future.

**Joseph:** Betany, I promise you to do my best to make a healthy, happy, and interesting life for the two of us. I promise to continue to support you in your Opera career. I promise that I will remain faithful to you in both mind and body. And I promise to remain your companion and friend. Thank you for the last two perfect years. And thank you for being the beautiful lady that I will spend the rest of my life with.

### Rings

May we please have the rings?

Betany, your ring has 7 rubies. You came together on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of April, your birthday is on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December and your wedding day falls in July, the 7<sup>th</sup> month. And July's birthstone is

the Ruby. These rings are symbolic of the love you share, and will be a reminder that even when you are apart, you will still be connected by the deep bond of that love.

Joseph, please place this ring on Betany's left hand...

Betany, please place this ring on Joseph's left hand...

### **Dahlberg Family Song**

Now the Dahlberg family will sing "*Down to the River to Pray*". Will the guests please join us in the fifth and final verse, which is printed in your program.

### **Blessing**

Betany and Joseph, we hope that you keep your commitment of love, support, and faithfulness in your hearts, and that you will remember to laugh, cuddle, and support each other always. We hope that you will travel the world together, and one day settle down in a house by the ocean. You are both so lucky to have loving, supportive family and friends, and how fortunate you are to have one another!

### **Pronouncement**

And you may tell the world with pride that you have chosen each other above all others! It gives me great pleasure to pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss!