

Cora and Patrick Riscoe
June 8, 2024 Wedding Ceremony Script
Officiant: James David Godwin

Welcome

Please be seated. Please silence and put away your phones.

See the professional photographers, Joseph and Gia. They are taking high quality photos and could be hampered from many sensational photos by arms holding cell phones between them and the subject, many a perfect wedding photo is ruined by such activities. Please put phones away and entrust recording the event to the hired professionals. Cora and Pat will have many photos to share and will be available to all on the internet.

What a beautiful bride and groom. I can't blame anyone for the impulse to grab a phone or camera and snap photos. Has there ever been a more beautiful bride and strikingly handsome groom? Cora and Pat have far more going for them than their appearances. Cora is an architect designer, and aspiring architect, and Patrick is training to be a physician. They are exceedingly over achievers in their professions. However, they have much more going for them than looks and careers. Christ said seek first His Kingdom and all these other things will be added as well. Today this is evident in these two standing before you.

Cora and Pat have great upbringings by exceptional parents who did well instilling values and virtue, such Godly standards into their children. We should acknowledge their parents, for the fine children they have raised. Mr. and Mrs. Bret and Michelle Blackford and Dr. and Mrs. Jim and Jan Riscoe, and Mrs. Kathy Riscoe who although is not physically present here today, I believe from the words of Jesus Christ that although she is in paradise, she is still mindful of those she loves and is certainly beaming with pride today just as Bret, Michelle, Jim and Jan are here with us today. These folks have done a fine job raising good, upright God fearing, God honoring children.

The Riscoe's and Blackford's want to acknowledge and thank everyone who has come to witness this event and welcome everyone to stay, visit and enjoy each other's company this evening.

When Cora asked me to participate in their wedding, I was shocked initially, but did not find it hard to find any inspiration to talk about. Not too long prior to being asked, I had heard several relatable sermons. The great philosopher/songwriter, Jason Mraz, said it well in one of his performances. "Every single creature believes him or herself to be the center of the entire universe, the center of all creation, the center of all that matters". Their observations all centered on what they perceive and how things will affect themselves. We are no exception. As a society we believe ourselves to be the most advanced that earth has ever seen. After all, we have access to a tremendous store of collective human knowledge and experience at our fingertips and on our cable TV, we can sit every evening and scan mindlessly through over 240 cable channels and still find nothing worth watching. Perhaps all these things are mere distractions and our ancestors are every bit our intellectual peers. Too often we erroneously believe ourselves superior to prior civilizations and their thoughts, philosophy and theology, because we have the internet? The New Testament of the Bible was written in Aramaic and Greek nearly 2,000 years ago. Greek is still a contemporary language used today. Although we may believe ourselves superior, the Greeks have nine words where we use only one, for "Love". I love my buddy, Bret [Blackford]. The Greeks would say that is philia that I have for my buddy (brotherly love). I love and take care of myself; the Greeks would say my love for self is philautia. Agape is the Greek word used for unconditional love. These words are all used in the original Greek language of the New Testament of the Bible. Agape, love the kind expressed by Jesus Christ, who loved unconditionally, us whose sins would forever separate us from God. Us who lacked knowledge or desire or ability to redress our sins, while we were still lost in sin, He was compelled to pour out His love for us demonstrated through his redemptive sacrifice as he breathed His final breath on the cross. He would rather surrender His life on this earth than face eternal life without us, and if it cost him this life, he willingly laid it down; Agape kind of Love.

Some say a marriage is only a piece of paper and they don't need that in their relationship. How much they come up short in recognizing the covenant that is a marriage, a declaration of Agape type, unconditional love, an obligatory arrangement for exclusiveness and unlimited commitment. Pat and Cora today have invited everyone here to witness their solemn vows of Agape permanent love. May God bless them in their ambitious endeavor, this marriage is far more than a paper documenting their commitment.

Moses first recorded the Laws we now practice and subscribe to over 3,500 years ago, in the Torah. The first five books of the Old Testament were written by him in Hebrew, an ancient, primitive language that perhaps a modern thinker could assume inferior to our language and culture today. The Torah has been studied relentlessly ever since by theologians and doctors parsing the meaning of every word from God. Print the Torah only, and you get a document that may be stack of papers ¾ of an inch thick. Print the Torah with commentaries and you get a book nearly 6 inches thick. I have a Torah with commentary, the work of many generations of intellectual study from many contributors. The result of over 5,000 years of deep study of God’s words.

In the first book of the Torah, Genesis, Moses recorded what previously had been passed down from generation to generation by oral tradition, the record of creation, Noah and Abraham and his descendants. In the second chapter Adam is in the Garden, and he had no, ...according to many modern English translations of the original words, he had no; “suitable helper” NIRV, “helper who is right” ICB, “helper fit for him” ESV, “Helpmate” KJV, “Companion suitable for him”, “helper”, “partner” and on and on.

A sermon I heard about a year ago; I heard a minister comment than many a Hebrew theological studier of the Old Testament, may contend we have this inaccurate, or incomplete representation of God’s intentions for Adam. Although the Torah was written in a simpler, primitive language, these people are certainly our intellectual equals if not better off for not having the internet and modern overwhelming distractions. The contention is a better, or more complete interpretation of the original scripture, a possible better translation would be, God will provide for Adam, a “deep friend”. That struck me memorably, what does a friend mean to me, what does a deep friend mean to me.

These two, Pat and Cora, met casually and have a wonderful story of a budding acquaintance and friendship developing as time spent together. They have become “Deep Friends”, and want to seal their commitment in vows before many witnesses, family and God today as a lasting covenant based on God’s example.

We’re gathered here today in the presence of God, family, and friends to witness the depth of that Agape love as Pat and Cora join together in the commitment of marriage.

Reading & Prayer

Reading

Cora requested a reading from the Apostle Paul, The first letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 13,

verses 4 through 7:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Prayer

Father, as Patrick and Cora pledge themselves to each other, help them and bless them that their love may be pure, and their vows may be true. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Vows

The foundations of a true marriage begins long before the wedding day, and the efforts of marriage continue long after the ceremony ends. A brief moment in time and the stroke of a pen are all it takes to form the legal bond of marriage, but it takes a lifetime of love, commitment, and compromise to make marriage durable and everlasting.

Patrick and Cora, the contract of marriage is not to be entered into lightly, but thoughtfully and seriously, and with a deep realization of its obligations and responsibilities.

Before you declare your vows to one another, we want to hear you confirm *before this assembled group of family and friends, and before our creator*, that it is indeed your intention to be married today.

Patrick, do you come here freely and without reservation to give yourself to Cora in marriage? If so, answer “I do.”

["I do."]

Cora, do you come here freely and without reservation to give yourself to Patrick in marriage? If so, answer “I do.”

["I do."]

The bride and groom have each prepared vows that they will read now. Patrick, when you're ready, you can go first.

Patrick and Cora exchange the vows they've written for each other

Please face each other and join hands. And now, Patrick, please repeat after me:

I, Patrick,

["I, Patrick,"]

take you, Cora,

["take you, Cora,"]

to be my wedded wife,

["to be my wedded wife,"]

to have and to hold,

["to have and to hold,"]

from this day forward,

["from this day forward,"]

for better, for worse,

["for better, for worse,"]

for richer, for poorer

["for richer, for poorer"]

in sickness and in health

["in sickness and in health"]

to love and to cherish

["to love and to cherish"]

til death do us part.

["til death do us part."]

Now, Cora, please repeat after me:

I, Cora,

["I, Cora,"]

take you, Patrick,

["take you, Patrick,"]

to be my wedded husband,

["to be my wedded husband,"]

to have and to hold,

["to have and to hold,"]

from this day forward,

["from this day forward,"]

for better, for worse,

["for better, for worse,"]

for richer, for poorer

["for richer, for poorer"]

in sickness and in health

["in sickness and in health"]

to love and to cherish

["to love and to cherish"]

til death do us part.

["til death do us part."]

Rings

Patrick and Cora will now exchange rings as a symbol of love and commitment to each other.

Patrick, please place the ring on Cora's left hand and repeat after me:

I give you this ring as a symbol

["I give this ring as a symbol"]

of my love and faithfulness to you.

["of my love and faithfulness to you".]

And Cora, please place the ring on Patrick's left hand and repeat after me:

I give you this ring as a symbol

["I give this ring as a symbol"]

of my love and faithfulness to you.

["of my love and faithfulness to you".]

Prayer "Will you pray with me?"

Our Holy Father in Heaven, your name is Holy and above all things, we trust in you. We long to be part of your Kingdom and live out our lives as your kingdom is present and foremost in our hearts. We are grateful that you have adopted and given us the right to be called Children of God, indeed Jesus calls us friends. We pray today for your provisions, before you are Pat and Cora and their pledge of marriage, that you will be the head of their home, your protection and provision ever present, protect them from harm and evil. Protect them from temptation, reside with them and guide them in their new lives together. May they live graciously and compassionately towards each other and others as you have lived by example. Yours is the Power we depend on, the Hope we trust in, yours is the Kingdom we seek, to you will be Glory in their lives as they dedicate themselves to you and to each other. In the holy name of Jesus Christ we ask these things, Amen.

The Declaration of Marriage / "The Kiss"

It is my honor to stand beside you both today, joined by the people that love and support you the most, as you take this next step.

Having witnessed your vows for marriage before God and all who are assembled here, ~~by the power vested in me by the state of Missouri~~, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

You may kiss the bride.

(bride and groom kiss)

I present to you for the first time, Patrick and Cora Riscoe!