Homily: The Marriage of Sophie and Elliott

Dear Friends, today we are privileged to be part of a new beginning in the life of Sophie and Elliott.

Sophie and Elliott, we share with you in ritual, the love you promise today as you bring together your hands and hearts, your journey and your families.

We also bring together in this one ritual two ancient faith traditions, represented specifically in the presence of priest and rabbi.

The key to the dialogue between those two traditions is of course the sacred memory of the covenant; the remembrance at all times and in all circumstances of the presence of the heart of God in the world, creating, renewing, transforming.

Thus we all pray 'Lord remember your people'. And we all counsel 'Remember the Lord your God.'

This is the story of each one of us; that we are held in the memory and heart of God; and that we are ambassadors of the glory of divine presence in our world.

That mystery is expressed in word, ritual and place, some of which we allude to today in our ceremony: the blessings, the breaking of glass; an important part of the religious tradition of Elliott and his family.

More acutely however, it is a mystery that is inscribed in living bodies; in the individual and corporate flesh, which is a work of accomplishment between God and humanity – a work of art – shining and transformative.

Sophie and Elliott, for most people, the most ordinary way in which these deep mysteries are realized is in love; in the sharing of hearts and minds, in marriage and in family life.

It is for this reason that the great religious traditions have always spoken of marriage as a Sacred Mystery, and not simply a human contract.

Sophie and Elliott, today, before your family and friends you invite into your lives the power of the Divine presence, the sacred *memoria* of the heart of God. You inscribe it in the flesh of your workaday lives from this day forward.

This sacred mystery therefore is celebrated not only today, and in this place, before us your family and friends and religious traditions. This sacred mystery is not simply a reminiscence. It's a looking forward, not a looking back.

It will come to unfold into the years ahead; that you might give to each other the very best, and that you might be for each other the very best. So that in one years time, and in ten years time, and when we all gather again for your 50th wedding anniversary, you will be more loving, more happy, more fulfilled, because of the love you have given and shared … between your two selves, in your children and in your family life, in the site of your friends, and by the impress of your kindness in the world.

That is the transformative work of art – making your home an ark of love in an often turbulent world.

The scripture reading and the prayer reflections you have chosen speak of this quest. St Paul, who describes himself as *Hebrew of Hebrews* and *Rabbi of the Pharisee tradition*, was very reluctant to write his famous *Letter to the*

Corinthians read beautifully today by your high school friend Brent. It was common knowledge that the rough and ready Corinthians were only interested in commerce, in bread and circus, wine and women. Yet, over 20 centuries, St Paul's beautiful words have become the touchstone for the meaning of love, and the manner in which love, in its daily and ordinary ways, transforms human hearts and minds. Love is patient and kind, hopes in all things, endures in all things. In the words of your Peace Prayer, read by your sister Eloise, love becomes its own instrument of peace in our world.

Sophie and Elliott, I am sure that the pledge of your family and friends here today is that they will encourage, support and build you up in that undertaking of love.

Our hope and our prayer for you today and into the future is that the covenant of God's presence in our world, the author of all life and love, will keep you always in the covenant of His sacred *memoria*. And that your love for each other will now grow stronger every day of your life together.

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