

Columbus, OH re-dedication International Marriage and Blessing Ceremony

Frank Sanchez
April 29, 2017



Our Columbus re-dedication Marriage and Blessing Ceremony transcended boundaries and religious affiliations and created a shared experience as one family under God. The eight couples reflected diversity, representing the Philippines, Japan, Mexico, and America.

Local Unificationists created the sense of team unity that I used to feel when we had workshops so many years ago. It was exhilarating to feel the love of Heavenly Parent and True Parents pour down on everyone. We could taste the wonder of this time in history and our place in it. We witnessed that this event was done with a pure heart and beauty as we are now living in the time of Cheon Il Guk.



The wondrous event was held in the chapel of UC Columbus on April 29th, 2017. As couples came for the re-dedication ceremony of their marriages, they were greeted by smiling ushers who helped them with the wedding veil for the lady and boutonniere for the man. Then they were ushered into the chapel through an arch beautifully decorated with lights and flowers. Tables were set with white tablecloths, satin runners, and a flower bouquet as the centerpiece. The chairs were covered with white cloth and tied with a bow in the back.

The front stage had a beautiful backdrop reading "Holy Marriage Blessing Ceremony," with a golden phoenix on each side. Even the loudspeakers were transformed into pillars of white with pink cloth and flowers. Unificationist Wayne Strautman lovingly offered background music.



After emcee Rev. Frank Sanchez welcomed everyone, he introduced Arlene Candelaresi to offer a prayer, followed by Michael Candelaresi who gave the Blessing Address, in which he explained the preciousness and value of the Marriage Blessing and gave thanks to True Parents for making this Holy Blessing accessible to all humankind.

The attending couples were introduced and made a pathway for the Blessing Officiators, Marquis and Kumiko Van de Mark, to come to the stage. Then all the participating couples followed them and stood facing the officiators.



During the next part of the program, the Holy Wine ceremony, the couples shared a glass of Holy Wine and cemented their willingness to be Blessed by Heavenly Parent. The officiators then sprinkled Holy Water on the couples. The last part was the reciting of the Blessing Vows which the couples confidently affirmed. When the officiators and the representing couple withdrew from the stage, congratulatory remarks were given by Nadya Hinson, who later said: "I felt when I gave the congratulatory words to them that they were the most important people in Ohio and the USA".

Wayne again gave us a beautiful song of love which everyone enjoyed.



A beautiful three-tier cake was brought in, and the couples participated in lighting the candles, blowing them out and cutting the cake. Of course, we had a group photo in which everyone from the audience could participate.



As the couples sat down, they were surprised to see a beautiful plate of celebration food awaiting them. Everyone was thrilled and stayed after the program for fellowship, enjoying the atmosphere and making new friends.

Special thanks to Rev. Sanchez, all the coordinators, and all those who helped make this glorious day possible; especially to the chefs, Miyo Hirowaki and Margaret Kim who served a delicious banquet. Also special thanks to Susan Nishio and Nadya and Melissa Hinson for the beautifully decorated chapel.

The seed had been planted; we want to keep planting many more seeds so we can have an abundant harvest in Columbus. I think we made our Heavenly Parent and our True Parents very happy.