

Foundation Day Marriage Blessing in Chicago, IL

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The Foundation Day Blessing Ceremony closed the Holy Day season, of which each celebration was observed in style at the Chicago Family Church. In Chicago, the Blessing event was celebrated at the Elk Grove Village Pavilion. Over 200 community members came out to support the event, including Evangelist Greta Meyers and her husband of Love Train Ministry. Evangelist Greta was in awe with both events. "Father and Mother Moon are truly the True Parents of humanity," she said. "They have really done everything to bring humankind back to God. I saw this in the Foundation Day Ceremony and more so in the Blessing Ceremony. The reciting of the vows is a deep responsibility for the couples to maintain."

Two couples received the Marriage Blessing in Chicago, including a previously married couple renewing their vows. Unificationist Kazumi Murray offered a very beautiful congratulatory song to the couples. After the cutting of the cake and the bridegrooms and brides feeding it to each other, the bridegrooms each gave a speech.

Mr. Shivkumar Patil, who is Hindu, gave a very emotional speech, expressing his deepest gratitude to his spiritual father for teaching him and his wife, Shivlita Patil, the Divine Principle for over one year. He said that though he has been married for 12 years, he feels that only now could he truly offer his marriage to God. "I am eternally grateful to God and True Parents for giving this grace to everyone who seeks it," he said.

The other couple's groom, Brian Tymkiw, received the Blessing with Sarah Kim, daughter of FFWPU North America Continental Chairman, Dr. Ki Hoon Kim. Brian comes from a traditionally catholic family, of which all were impressed by the Foundation Day Ceremony and touched by the serenity of the Blessing Ceremony. He thanked Unificationist Min Han Rinkema and his wife for teaching him the Divine Principle and the support he received from Pastor John and Mrs. Porter.

"In the beginning, I was skeptical about studying the Divine Principle, but after talking with Sarah I realized how much it meant to her and her family," he said. "So I started studying and quickly I realized the value of adopting this teaching. I will continue to practice this in my life with Sarah." He also thanked his parents and the Kim family for supporting and accepting them on this new road of life, a path he promises to continue with Sarah.

"Seeing everyone come out and participate and show us love and support made me really happy," said Sarah. "It makes my heart feel so full."

Mrs. Tamme Kim then gave a speech in which she praised the couples for making this bold commitment and said that she, her husband and family will continue to support their daughter and new son-in-law in every way.

To end the celebration, they heard an original song performed by John and Keiko Healy, written just after they received the Blessing themselves in 1982. Then they had a group dance led by Mrs. Doraci Porter and her two children. Both couples joined the dance, after which the dance floor was opened up to everyone and the couples, families and guests danced the night away.

"Seeing these beautiful couples really gave me a lot of hope," commented Unificationist Nadya Kamiyama, "because they are committing themselves not only to each other but, through their marriage, they want to show the world that there is the possibility to create true families centering on God."