

Friends,

We come here today to celebrate the wedding of Galina Vereschagina and Ervin Merkuri.

Today, on this beautiful spring day, as life grows all around us, we witness the birth of a new family.

The story of Galina and Ervin proves that there are no borders for true love and that two loving hearts will always find each other. They began life in different countries: she is from Ukraine, he is from Albania. Their lives took them both to the Czech Republic, where they met, and later to the United States, where they marry today.

(I wonder where would they move from here? ;-))

They have been together for almost seven years. Much of that time has been spent living apart; they have maintained their relationship through countless hours of phone calls and tens of thousands of miles on airplanes.

Sometimes it seemed very hard, but they made the best of it. They took advantage of the chance to travel together to many places, meeting each other's friends along the way. They have learned to enjoy the same movie or bottle of wine in different places but at the same time. They can sense when a phone call is coming from the other. Galina points out one more benefit of the long distance that has separated them: the premier status with United that she is very proud of. Ervin doesn't have premier status, but maybe that is because an economist like Galina understands the benefits of specialization.

So their road to this point has been a long one. They say, though, that from the very beginning they knew that they were made for each other, and have known for a long time that a day would come when someone would pronounce them husband and wife.

It took them some time to realize it was going to be me.

I asked them to describe in their own words how they feel about each other. Here is what they said:

Galina said about Ervin:

He is a very strong and very persistent person, in everything: in his tastes, his values, his friendship and his love. His support is endless. He can always find the right words to make me feel better if I am upset, comfort me if I am worried or make the decision if I am in doubt. He has brought a lot of meaning to my life, and a lot of joy and excitement too. Sometimes I feel that he has made me the happiest person in the world.

Ervin said about Galina:

Gala's like a sunflower, constantly glittering with sympathy and warmth. Her presence says it all for me...It comforts me to think how beautiful and reliable, and smart, she is. I couldn't ask for more. We like similar things, kids included. Together we can clearly see to the finish, and together we'll reach there happy and multiplied

So they come here today, their love stronger than ever, their plans clearer than ever. They are very happy about the prospects ahead are glad to share this day with you. They seek your support and hope for your blessing; if anyone has any objection, say so now.

Galina's father wants to add some words of his own.

Now Galina and Ervin will take the vows that they have written. Galina, please repeat after me.

I, Galina, take you, Ervin, to be my husband, my partner in life, my one true love, and the father of my children. I will be yours in times of plenty and in times of want, in times of sickness and in times of health, in times of joy and in times of sorrow, in times of failure and in times of triumph. I promise to cherish and respect you, to care and protect you, to comfort and encourage you, forever and ever.

As a symbol of her unending love, Galina will now give Ervin a ring which represents the commitment they are making to each other today.

Ervin, please repeat after me.

I, Ervin, take you, Galina, to be my wife, my partner in life, my one true love, and the mother of my children. I will be yours in times of plenty and in times of want, in times of sickness and in times of health, in times of joy and in times of sorrow, in times of failure and in times of triumph. I promise to cherish and respect you, to care and protect you, to comfort and encourage you, forever and ever.

As a symbol of his unending love, Ervin will now give Galina a ring which represents the commitment they are making to each other today.

As you have taken these vows and exchanged these rings before family and friends, you enter into marriage. I am happy to now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss.

I'm happy to present to you the new couple.