

Notre-Damme, Jerusalem 01/21/2005

**Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini's speech during the wedding ceremony of
Hanan and Peter Bawa Jain**

I wish to express again my joy and privilege; it is a great honor to be here to celebrate the mystery of the Lord, for this great mystery of marriage, of Hanan and Peter Bawa. Every marriage is God's gift, every marriage is a great mystery, and the first reading speaks about this mystery of marriage. It says: God said "let us make man in our image after our likeness", and then "God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; Male and female he created them". Therefore, whenever there is a union of a man and a woman, for a project of life, there is God's mystery, God's presence, God's likeness. But marriage is not only a mystery in God's image, but it is also in the image of Jesus. As Jesus loved his Church, and gave his life for her, so bride and bridegroom should love each other and give her and his life for each other. Therefore, every marriage is an image of Jesus and of his love for the Church. Besides that and above that, a marriage, every marriage is on the image of the Holy Trinity. As the persons of the Holy Trinity are each one for the other so the two who marry are each one for the other, they forget their life to serve the life of the other, and so they are in the image of the Holy Trinity.

This is the great gift of every marriage. But this marriage has a special gift and a special importance. I want to emphasize this. This is a marriage where two cultures, two people, two religious traditions combine together. This is a marriage which is a promise of unity, unity for mankind, unity for the entire humanity. The great continent of India, with all its cultures, traditions, religions and customs and the great country of this Palestine with the great tradition, culture and all customs. If you are together, this is a sign that unity can be achieved in all humanity. That peace may become on us and war maybe overcome. Therefore, your marriage is a special gift of God, and a special sign of peace and unity and understanding among people. But for

this of course there are requirements, it is not an easy thing to do, and these requirements are expressed in the second reading of the Apostle St. Paul to the Colossians, where it is described the daily life of marriage. Exactly, Paul reminds us of seven attitudes, plus one, plus one, seven, eight, nine, the sacred numbers. The seven attitudes are: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another, forgive one another and the eighth attitude is love, which is the center of all this, the bound of perfection and the ninth attitude is peace; it is a gift of God. But you will notice that these seven attitudes are not so much active attitudes, it is to do something, but more passive attitudes: humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another, forgiving one another, through this in every day life, a marriage is made to perfect unity and has also perfect peace, to show to all the children of God in this world that they have to achieve peace not through acts of war or through acts of violence, but through acts of kindness, forgiveness, humility, patience. Therefore, you are a sign for the entire humanity, for this country, for all throughout the world.

The first reading was about the mystery of marriage the second reading was about the daily life in marriage, the third reading is about the miracle of marriage. There are many miracles in this marriage. The history shows that there are many miracles and with Hanan we were witness of these miracles one after the other. Therefore, we can say that the good wine has been kept until now. Hanan is a good wine and Peter Bawa is the good wine, kept until know. We congratulate you because you represent this good wine, but the miracle is not this. The miracle is that our weakness, that is water which has no flavor, is transformed into wine, which has strength and power. Therefore, the miracle is our weakness, which you would be not able to do all what is required if it is not for God's grace, and God's grace will create this mystery of your unity and your love, will change our weakness and transform it into good grace and good wine. But more than that, I want to add another point which I think is important. Wine is not necessary to live; we can live with plain water. But wine is this superfluous, which is for the joy of life. Therefore, marriage is not always to do with some rules and regulations (this is water). It is joy, love, is to do beyond

what is required, beyond what is absolutely necessary, to do with joy, to do with enthusiasm all the little things of everyday life. This is your wine and for this wine it is very, very important the presence of Mary. Mary has done great things for this marriage. Mary has implored the grace of God for you and she will be with you everyday during your life together and bring this life to be a great sign of unity for the human families. And we wish for you that your family will be an example for many families and be a family that brings peace and joy to all humanity. For this we pray and with sentiment with these feelings we approach now to the great words that you shall say, you will answer to my question, "I do" and this "I do" will for all your life symbolize the forgiveness of God for you.