

# On Love — and Fire — in Windsor

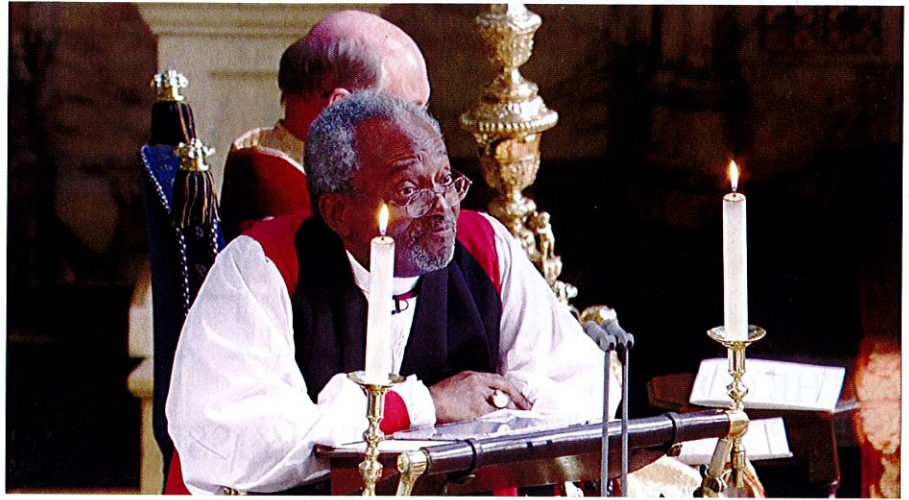
In the lead up to the May 19 wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, many unusual elements, not least the marriage of a British prince and an American actress, captured the attention of the press. But on the day of the wedding, it was the preaching of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry that surprised worldwide media, the Twitterverse, and those inside St. George's Chapel.

Curry began his 13-minute sermon, which *Vanity Fair's* Katey Rich described as feeling “entirely different from a traditional royal wedding service,” by quoting the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.: “We must discover the power of love, the redemptive power of love. And when we do that, we will make of this old world a new world. Love is the only way.”

Curry continued to extol the power of love — and not just the love of a young couple. “Jesus of Nazareth, on one occasion, was asked to sum up the essence of the teachings of Moses,” he said. “And he reached back to the Hebrew Scriptures of Deuteronomy and Leviticus. And Jesus said, ‘You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like it: love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Curry described the new earth that God will establish through love: “When love is the way, there is plenty of good room for all of God’s children. Because when love is the way, we actually treat each other like we are actually family. When love is the way, we know that God is the source of us all. And we are brothers and sisters, children of God. My brothers and sisters, that’s a new heaven, a new Earth, a new world, a new human family.”

Curry’s sermon drew laughs at his promise to end with alacrity to “get ya’ll married” and at a reference to the social dysfunction instilled by social media. It also drew high praise from traditional media. The BBC, the *Independent*, and CBS News all called



YouTube/CBC News photos

Curry’s sermon “powerful.” But the consensus among many — including the *Telegraph*, *The Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, *news.com.au*, *The Independent*, *Reuters*, *Vox*, *The Sun*, *HuffPost UK*, and *GQ* — was that Curry, in fact, “stole the show.”

On Twitter, T.J. Holmes of ABC’s *Good Morning America* said, “We have a breakout star of this #RoyalWedding: Rev. Michael Bruce Curry.”

*The New York Times* compared Curry’s sermon to the presence of Pippa Middleton at Prince William and Princess Kate’s 2011 wedding. “Keep your fascinators, tiaras, regalia and romance,” wrote Margaret Lyons, Anna Schaverien, and Jonah Engel

Bromwich. “What if the surprise biggest star — the Pippa Middleton, if you will — of this royal wedding was a sermon about love?” The *Times* wrote that the service had been “staid, stuffy even” until Curry’s sermon.

Indeed, the presiding bishop’s sermon, delivered with the welcoming energy and evangelizing flair to which Episcopalians are accustomed, may have caught unawares royals expecting a staid, stuffy homily. Or, as WXYZ Detroit’s Brad Galli tweeted, “Watching the royals watch American Bishop Michael Curry has become an unexpected highlight of this #RoyalWedding. This man is fantastic.”

*Matthew Townsend*