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Another First

Jessica & Andrew Tie the Knot

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On the 31st May 2003 Jessica and I chose to legalise our relationship which began with a Commitment Service in the Wayside Chapel on 21st August 1999 followed by a Nuptial Mass in full Ecumenical Catholic splendour.

The wedding and reception was attended by people who have known Jessica and me practically all our lives and have stood with us through the changes, the cross-dressing right through the surgery to now ...

We sent out invitations to all who had attended the original non-legal ceremony and left leaflets in various other places to give anyone who wanted to the opportunity to see history in the making.

As far as we are aware this was the first legal wedding between two transsexuals. We could just as easily have had a civil ceremony but we wanted to be married in our faith community. It was a first for the E.C.C.A., too - their first wedding. Earlier this year they had inducted me into the Seminary and had baptised a baby and given first Holy Communion to our second youngest member of this congregation - but ours was the first wedding of any kind.

We were married in the Pro-cathedral of St. John the Beloved of the Ecumenical Catholic Church of Australia by the Bishop Primus himself.

Jessica's matron of honour was Shelly, who is one of the respite workers who takes care of Jessica each Thursday while I am working. Karl, a friend of ours gave her away - mainly so that she would not need her white cane to negotiate the aisle.

My best man was Richard, English like me and who first met me the year before I went into transition while I was a Drag King named, - well Andrew of course!

For those of you who will visit the web - The Celebrant was the Right Reverend Bishop Ronald Langham, with Fr. John Rolley as M.C., the Acolyte was the Reverend Father Deacon Peter who has since been priested, and the Server was Br. Luke.

Karl who has a terrific voice also doubled-up as our Cantor for the afternoon and led the congregation in the responses. We didn't have enough hymn books for everyone so we decided to have a Liturgy using responses and some Taizé which all seemed to know.

For the liturgically minded - we used the Readings of the Day and the first reading was read for us by Jean who is someone who has known me, woman and man, for twenty years at least, we taught Scripture together and were both Lectors at St. John's Campbelltown, our children grew up there together.

Mary, from St. Luke's Stanmore read the second reading - Mary has come to understand and accept quite a lot from me in the three years she has known me. She used to be quite homophobic, though what the two things - 'transsexual' and 'homosexual' have to do with each other I'm not sure - except I used to be a lesbian.

The wedding and reception was attended by people who have known Jessica and me practically all our lives and have stood with us through the changes, the cross-dressing right through the surgery to now and who are still with us. Real friends are the ones who remain when everyone else has departed.

Friends from Acceptance Sydney provided bottles of bubbles for everyone and we were well and truly bubbled all down the aisle to the traditional wedding march.

It is very sad that only one member of either of our families attended - Kevin, partner of Jessica's cousin, Ron. We had asked him if he might give Jessica away since her father passed away some years back but he was not sure he would be on time since he came there from work hence Karl was happy to step into the breach.

My mother was diagnosed with leukaemia the Wednesday before the wedding and both my sons with their wife/male partners and my

granddaughters decided to go and visit her on the very day of the wedding. They seemed to think that visiting her on that very day was a good enough reason not to attend the wedding.

It has been difficult even for my gay son to come to terms with the changes in my life and now that Jessica really is the wicked step-mother rather than just my partner it has given them something more to think about. The saddest thing is that I don't get to see my grandchildren - well it seems that taking time to come to terms is a family trait since it took me thirty-one years from marriage to a male - to marriage to a female. I guess that eventually when David is a grandfather he might have come to terms with me.

Jessica and I spent four days and three nights at Lightning Ridge where we had a wonderful time and found some opal potch as well.

Since we have been back we have gained two copies of the same Medicare card with Jessica on it as my number two and likewise joint pension cards and a \$29.00 N.S.W. Marriage Certificate which is the one legally required for any documentation requiring one in the future. We also purchased a 'Flora and Fauna' Special one for \$42.00 which has a platypus right above our Wedding Date.

As a person of Aboriginal descent the platypus is Jessica's Totem and that makes the commemorative certificate all the more special. It now hangs on the wall opposite her commemorative birth certificate purchased in 2000.

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