

Teachers never get enough thanks for the work that they do. They have studied hard to obtain the necessary knowledge and credentials. They sacrifice during the academic year to prepare classes, teach in some difficult situations, prepare exams, grade papers, attend meetings, and meet with parents. They often do this at a salary that poorly represents how essential they are for the good of our society. They derive satisfaction when students achieve success. But something else keeps good teachers going in spite of all the challenges of their work: they love their job. They love helping students learn.

Kevin and Courtney both have all these qualities: a good work ethic, the necessary skills to teach, and a love for their job. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that love is the essential ingredient not just in work, but in life. He acknowledges the great skills that people possess: some speak in human and angelic tongues, some have the gift of prophecy, and - close to a modern day description of teachers - he says that some "comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge." Paul gives due awe to people with these gifts. Then he says that if he possessed all of them, but without love, he would be nothing; he would gain nothing. With love you can put all your skills to a higher purpose. Good teachers demonstrate this. Sometimes I'll ask a kid, "What's your favorite subject at school?" And when they give me an answer, I then ask, "Is that teacher good?" Invariably they smile as if I've cracked open a window on their heart. "Yeah," they say. When students love a teacher, they love what that teacher teaches. That teacher teaches well because of love.

Kevin and Courtney you are entering into a sacred union today filled with many natural gifts and talents. God has blessed you both with comprehension of mysteries and knowledge. You have learned much. You have believed much. And you have loved much.

As you enter marriage, you do so with the greatest gift of all, the gift of love. Now, even though you are teachers, you will both become students. You will learn what married life demands, and how it rewards. You will learn more about your partner for life, and because of your love, your spouse will become your favorite teacher. You will also teach us the beauty of love and sacrifice, not just from what happens in your classrooms but because of what happens in your home. You will be examples to us of patience, kindness, forbearance, belief, and truth.

At the Last Supper, during his final night on earth, Jesus explained to his disciples what he most hoped from them. "Remain in my love," he said. "If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love." These commandments are not burdensome; they are the source of satisfaction. Jesus said, "I have told you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete." We owe our happiness to God. Teachers never get enough thanks for the work that they do; God doesn't either. Kevin and Courtney, we thank God for giving you this day of joy, and we pray that through your faith, love and example, with the help of God, your joy may be complete.