

Julian Torres & Candace Estrada Wedding

When you put a granite top onto a counter, it looks beautiful. But only if you've taken the time to make the right decision. Some things you cannot change - the shape and size of the counter, the space it occupies in the room, the color and texture of the walls. So you have to decide on the type of stone and choose from a range of colors to get the right one that will pull everything together in the room. You may have to sacrifice something. It may have to do with shape, size or cost. You may have to review a variety of samples and think through all the implications of your choice before you can decide which one is the one.

Julian's business is a metaphor for what we are witnessing today. Both he and Candace come to this moment after a long process of selection. They have tried other ways to fulfill their lives, experimenting widely in the extended range of hopes that friendship affords. In relationships, some things you cannot change - about yourself and about the person you love. So you adjust to make the arrangement beautiful. This has been their task and challenge, and today they make it their commitment. They have found the perfect partner to make a beautiful home. They have found the one who is the one.

The road ahead will be lovely, but it will not always be easy. In the second reading that Julian and Candace chose for the mass today, Saint Paul writes to the Romans about a difficult road ahead. He's writing not to newlyweds, but to new Christians living in community. Even though they have chosen the same faith, they do not always get along. Paul gives advice. I'll repeat part of it for you. When you listen to it, remember that he's addressing a large group of people who worship together, like members of a parish, but the same advice applies to newlyweds: "Let love be sincere; ...love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor." Often people today withhold showing honor to someone until they've proven that they deserve it. No. St. Paul says, "anticipate one another in showing honor." Be the first. He goes on: "Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer." And then another piece of advice that's hard to hear: "Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality." These are virtues that all Christians should embrace. Julian and Candace embrace them now in a particular way as they bring Christ into their home through marriage in the church.

The advice that St. Paul gives at the head of this reading is perhaps the most challenging for all of us: "Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect." Paul asks us to renew our mind, to think first of God's will, not our own, to work not toward what is divisive and hurtful to our enemies, but what is good and pleasing and perfect. A wedding day is a perfect day to exercise a renewal of the mind - the placing of a new granite countertop onto our own heads, one that we choose because it pulls everything else together and makes it perfect, the granite that is Christ.

Julian and Candace, we rejoice with you today as you share your love, and we yearn to learn from you today as you make this commitment. You give us an example of a renewal of the mind, a mind that from this day forward rests atop the foundation of Christ.

Saturday, August 18, 2018