

I don't know much about marketing. Like anyone, I run into it every day without realizing it. Marketers probably like it that way. They want to call your attention to the product, not to the people who made you look at it. Adam and Kate both studied this field, and I guess you could say they fell in love with each other not because of marketing but because of the product.

Churches do not always market themselves very well. We proclaim the gospel and hope that will be enough. We figure if we stay on point with the message, everything else will take care of itself. Sometimes it doesn't. We can use the assistance of people who know how to get the message out. Traditionally, the best marketers of a church are the believers themselves, who have embraced the teachings of Christ, live by them and tell others about them.

Jesus gave clear direction for this in the Beatitudes. These are the verses that open the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's gospel. To read chapters 5, 6 and 7 is to encounter the principle teachings of the kingdom of heaven. They offer guidance to every Christian. Even people of good will who do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God will find here clear guidance for a satisfying life.

When the Catholic Church celebrates a wedding, one of the scripture passages it recommends is the Beatitudes. Couples don't have to pick this one; there are others. I love it that Adam and Kate invited us to pause over these words on their wedding day. The Beatitudes have to do with being a good Christian, not specifically with having a happy marriage. But being a good Christian should lead to a happy marriage. If those who believe in Christ stay faithful to his teachings, they will find great personal satisfaction, a source of unity with their Christian partner for life, and a joint inspiration for following Christ two by two, not just one by one.

Specifically, they will be poor in spirit - they will treasure the spiritual life above the material world. They will mourn with their friends who suffer a loss. They will be meek in conversations with each other, rather than trying always to score points. They will want righteousness for the world, especially for neighbors who are oppressed. They will show mercy to those in need, sharing from their resources with those who have less. They will remain clean of heart, true to the promises they make on their wedding day. They will be peacemakers, and train their children to find nonviolent solutions to their problems. They will suffer persecution together for holding fast to principles that others deem out of touch. They will rejoice and be glad, and they will discover in their love for each other that they are already enjoying the kingdom of heaven.

The best marketing any church could do is to have believers who act like that. Adam and Kate, we thank you for the witness you bear. We rejoice in the love you share. We pray that you will keep Christ close to your hearts all the days of your life.