

Years ago when I first heard from some engaged couples that they met each other on line, I got really nervous. I thought, my goodness, how could something electronic replace something so personal as negotiating a first date? But I have since learned that technology does not exclude the possibility of personal results. Joe and Abby are a good example; they may never have met any other way. They had similar interests, but those interests hadn't naturally brought them into the same physical space at the right time. So they did it the way many couples do it today: they met online, and they actually got engaged in person. But no other couple I know got engaged while playing the ukulele.

God works in some mysterious ways. We believe that God is love, that God loves us first, and that we love God back. In our human relationships, the love of one person feeds the love of the other. Sometimes it's hard to remember who loved first. But with God the answer is always the same: God loves first. Everything we do responds.

The passage we heard from the Letter to the Hebrews today opens with the words, "Let mutual love continue." The author knows that love inspires love, and hopes that mutual love will endure especially among Christians.

Other verses in this passage make me think of Joe and Abby. The Letter says, "Do not neglect hospitality." Joe, I don't know if you think about your work this way, but engineers do amazing things conceptually in order to improve society. They design buildings and systems to connect people in person, not just on line, to provide a place for work and opportunities to socialize. A good engineer provides remote hospitality. The Letter to the Hebrews then says in reference to people who know who suffer, "you are also in the body." Abby, that verse encourages Christians to care for prisoners - especially those unjustly imprisoned - and for people who are ill-treated. They are all suffering in the body. You studied nursing and have done case work in cardiac rehab. You have opportunities to show compassionate care to people who suffer in the body.

This biblical passage is recommended for weddings partly because it says, "Let marriage be honored by all," but also because it implies something about how Christians who marry should act. As a couple they should offer hospitality, especially to the children we pray God will place in their care. As a couple, they should be mindful of those who suffer because spouses who work on mutual love are prepared to share love with many others.

This passage concludes with God's promise, "I will never forsake you or abandon you." God's love will endure. We like to believe that even if two people find each other on line, it is because God had a plan. If God can use a mutual friend to introduce a future husband and wife, God can certainly use the internet. God loves you first. Like any lover, God hopes that you will love back. You will show this love by your prayer to God and your charity to your neighbor. You both lead busy lives, but the time you give each other will make the rest of each day easier, and the time you give God will do the same.