

In the midst of the heat wave this month, a television station showed footage of the streets this past Christmas Day. Do you remember the weather that day? I was completely snowed in, and I thought the only reasons people should go out on a day like this were if there was some emergency, or if they were completely out of their minds.

Marc and Emily were out in that snow. They had to be. Marc had just given Emily a ring, and they dearly wanted to tell their families that they were now officially engaged. True love can overcome many obstacles. It is an absolute joy, and everything else disappears around it.

The Book of Genesis offers a beautiful story about our first parents. The reason that man and woman came together is this: the Lord God created the man first, and then said, "It is not good for the man to be alone." We can only guess that this same insight moved God to create the world in the first place, perhaps thinking, "It is not good for the Lord God to be alone." In any case, the writer of the Book of Genesis concluded that God loved people enough to give them to each other.

The story also says that God first created animals and birds, trying to give the man a partner. None of that was working. Only then did God build up a woman out of a rib from the man, and gave her to him. It's a lovely story because it also imagines that the reason we have animals is that God was trying, trying to make the first man happy, and that God had to experiment a bit before getting the partnership exactly right.

A good farmer loves the soil, loves the plants, and loves the animals. But a good farmer also knows that none of that makes a suitable partner for life. We rejoice today that just as God created a partner for the first man, so he created a partner for Marc, and kept her concealed from him until they could meet in college, fall in love, drive through snow, and prepare for their wedding.

Emily and Marc, we believe that God will never abandon you, that God created the two of you for each other, and that you will find happiness with each other. You will be drawn into many different kinds of service – service to the community through farming and education, and service to the family you look forward to starting. It is hard to keep giving of yourself for the people who depend on you, but you can if your love for each other remains strong. That love is a gift from God; it shows God's love for you.

We thank you for embracing that love and giving us a witness of your faithfulness to each other. Be assured of our prayers and support as you go forth from this day to overcome challenges and to enjoy the partnership that God has brought to you.