

**This past January I first sat down with the recently engaged Jason and Erin. We were totally naive about what 2020 would bring. Since then we've all experienced unfolding challenges to health and the economy. But these two are still in love, still ready to make a commitment, and still anxious to start life anew. It's a commonplace to say that on their wedding day a bride and groom have only a small idea of what lies ahead of them in marriage; but on their engagement day, you expect they have a pretty good idea of what will happen between then and the wedding. That was not the case.**

**Fittingly, they've chosen a passage from the Book of Tobit as the first reading for their wedding. Here's the backstory: Tobit was blinded in an accident at home. There's no polite way to say this: he lay down outside and a bird pooped in his eyes. He sent his son Tobiah on a journey to retrieve the family fortune. Tobiah contracted a guide, not knowing he had just hired the angel Raphael. In the end Tobiah the son got several treasures: the money, a potion that would cure his father's blindness, and a wife named Sarah. Engagements happened very differently then. When Tobiah arrived at his destination, he asked Raguel, who was holding the family fortune, permission to marry his daughter Sarah. Raguel agreed but told him this sad truth: Sarah had been married seven times already, and some demon killed her grooms on the night of each wedding. Tobiah's faith was strong, he married Sarah that day, and on his wedding night the two of them prayed that God would protect them from all harm. He declared before God that he was taking Sarah "not because of lust, but for a noble purpose." God answered their prayer, and they lived happily ever after.**

**Engagements do not happen this way today. People don't marry within the family. They don't get engaged before they meet, and they don't get married on the day they get engaged. But this much is still true. Nobody knows the future when they fall in love. Tobiah didn't even know the past. And this much our faith tells us, that God will accompany us on our journeys and will bring us safely home.**

**Engagements today require a greater investment of time and discernment. Couples do get to know each other very well, and they begin to practice what marriage will ask of them. St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians spells this out in especially strong terms for the husband. Paul wrote, "Christ loved the Church and handed himself over for her." That is, Jesus underwent suffering and death out of love. Most people expect pleasure out of love, but love demands suffering as well. Holding up this model of Christ handing himself over for the one he loved, Paul wrote, "Husbands, love your wives" like that. The strongest relationships offer this great gift: People derive the greatest pleasure when they give the greatest love—not when they receive it.**

**Jason and Erin, we rejoice with you today. You have both followed Christ throughout your lives. You even went to Mass together as part of your first date and in the hours before you got engaged. You have made the prayer of Tobiah and Sarah your own. We pray with you that God will protect you for all harm and lead you ever more deeply on the journey of love.**

**Eucharistic Prayer Intro:**

The chalice that Jason and Erin will use for communion today belonged to Msgr. Joseph Gladbach, Erin's great uncle, the deceased brother of Erin's grandmother, who is here today. The diamond in this chalice came from the engagement ring of their mother, Erin's great-grandmother, who was married in this cathedral. When Erin asked me last night if it were possible to use her great-uncle Father Joe's chalice for the wedding, I said that'd be terrific. In fact, the chalice I'm using these days belonged to my grandmother's brother, my great-uncle, Father Joe. We have many reasons to give God thanks as we begin the church's great act of thanksgiving, the Eucharistic Prayer.

**Conclusion of Mass:**

Jason and Erin want me to remind you that you're now invited to the reception, and they ask you kindly to keep your masks on during the reception for the safety and enjoyment of all. Now please join me in congratulating Mr. & Mrs. Jason and Erin Moore.