

**My heart goes out to engaged couples who planned their weddings for the year 2020. For all their lives they've dreamed about their wedding day, the one opportunity to gather family and friends to celebrate not only their personal love for each other, but the range of relationships that knitted their lives together up to this point. A wedding celebrates a network of family and friends, and it launches a couple into the next phase of their lives upon a sea of support.**

**The pandemic has reordered such dreams, and couples have had to make difficult choices. It says a lot about Alex and Christina that they've decided to go forward with their wedding today with a smaller group in attendance. It's not that they don't want everyone else here; they want everyone else safe. They love the people who love them, and they want them to practice healthy ways. This couple knows what really matters: the wedding, not the glamor that could attend it.**

**This shouldn't surprise us. Alex and Christina have built their education and careers on health: physical, psychological, and emotional health. They care about the whole person. They model this in their own lives by the way they take care of themselves and of each other. They have even progressed in the spiritual life, rediscovering Jesus Christ and encountering him in the sacraments of the Church.**

**For these reasons two of the scripture passages they chose for their wedding seem especially fitting. One comes from the final section of the Letter to the Hebrews, where the writer gives advice to the Christian community reading this epistle. It includes a line, "Let marriage be honored by all," but to build up to that appeal, it makes some other points: "Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels." A newly married couple focuses on hospitality. They pray that God will send children into their home, where parents practice the greatest acts of hospitality. Alex and Christina will also invite friends to their home, and conversely urge them to stay home when it is for their own good health.**

**In the first reading we heard the account of the wedding night of Tobiah and Sarah from the Book of Tobit. Tobiah loved Sarah even before meeting her; She had had a difficult life—losing seven husbands before this one, all on the wedding night. Tobiah believed that with God's help they would conquer every evil. So on their wedding night, Tobiah got Sarah up from bed and said, "We've got to pray. We've got to pray that God will help us through every adversity." She agreed, and together they offered the beautiful prayer we heard in that reading. Tobiah proclaims to God that he enters this relationship not out of lust but for a noble purpose. God grants their prayer and they live happily ever after.**

**Alex and Christina, when you look back on this day, you'll be able to say with confidence that you imitated the good spiritual center of Tobiah and Sarah. You entered this marriage for a noble purpose, even amid great dangers, and you put yourselves in God's hands. We all pray with you that God will guide you through every adversity that lies inside and outside a pandemic, so that you will better guide others who strive to learn what you have learned: how to live a healthy life in the eyes of God.**