

Tom Greer & Candace Villanueva

This all started in this cathedral three years ago this month on a Saturday afternoon when Father Ken Riley was preparing for Mass on the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A. Tom and Candace have both served as readers here, but they had not met. They happened to walk in the front door at the same time, and Father Riley, on a whim, introduced them. Well, he did more than introduce them. He told them how appropriate it was to meet when one of them would proclaim the assigned reading from Proverbs 31 about a worthy wife. So, these two got together, they broke it off for a while, they got together again, and here we are.

You can hear that same reading from Proverbs 31 next weekend when it comes around again. Tom suggested we hear some other verses from the same chapter for the wedding today, and he and Candace did an extraordinary job selecting them. These open with King Lemuel recalling his mother's advice about dating in the 8th or 10th century BC. She started with these words to her son: "What are you doing?" Then she advised him to control his emotions and become a king who judges justly and defends the needy and the poor.

Proverbs 31 follows this with a lovely poem about a worthy wife. Her value goes beyond jewels. Her husband trusts her judgment. She contributes income to the household. She manages property. She has physical strength, inner dignity, and a bold future. The husband also provides for the household, and people seek him in public settings for wisdom. Their children admire the way their mother instructs other people as well. She may be charming and beautiful, but Proverbs cautions, "charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting." Virtues last forever. If you fall in love with the person, not with how they look, you will live a happy life.

St. Paul tells the Philippians, if you want peace, think about what is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely and gracious, things of excellence and worthy of praise. If thinking of your spouse causes inner peace, you are blessed indeed.

Tom and Candace, you both possess these virtues, and when we think of you, we experience peace. Last night I complimented both of your fathers on how well they raised their children; they each responded like King Lemuel: Their mother is responsible. At weddings I sometimes feel compelled to remind engaged couples that God gave you the gift of love not as a private matter, but for you to share with other people. You already demonstrate your care for others in your family, your circle of friends, complete strangers, and the hungry who come here to Morning Glory Ministries. You already have the firm foundation of Christ on which you will build your home.

Tom, you're an engineer who knows how to build bridges. Candace, you're a student, a student of education, and an educator. You are both already devoting your lives to making our community a better place. It's exciting to think of all that you can do as a couple.

Somehow the Holy Spirit foresaw all of this and prompted Father Riley to set things in motion. We pray today that you continue doing God's will, grow in grace and goodness, share the wisdom you have received, make our community better, and have a lot of fun along the way. Then, whenever God asks you, "What are you doing?" you'll be able to say, "creating peace."

Saturday, November 7, 2020