

Dennis Wolf & Sarah Scoggins

When Dennis and Sarah settled on the date for their wedding, they probably thought that their children and grandchildren could easily remember the day, Halloween. Instead, people are going to remember the year, 2020—sadly more for the pandemic than for optometry. I first met with this couple last November in what now feels like a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away. I was immediately impressed with their maturity, their education, their jobs, the way they spoke of their home towns in Missouri and of their families, and their comfort with their faith. My mother grew up in rural Minnesota, so I've always had a warm spot in my heart for small town life and the family farm.

Because Dennis and Sarah have been anchored so well in values, they have had the inner strength required of any engaged couple in 2020 to prepare for a wedding under conditions they could never have anticipated. This couple did what needed to be done, cutting back on some of the plans, while seeing the dream of their wedding day shift its shape. They did all this with poise and positivity because they knew what mattered: They were getting married.

When Sarah and Dennis planned the scripture readings for us to hear today, they worked on the list independently of each other and discovered they had chosen the same three passages: the Genesis account of Adam and Eve starting family life, Paul's beautiful description of the gift of love, and Jesus' analogy of building a house. This gospel seems especially perfect for this couple. Jesus praises the wise man who built his house on rock. When forces of nature afflicted the residence, it stood strong because of its foundation.

Dennis and Sarah bring a strong foundation of faith in Jesus Christ to their relationship, and you could see in them the fulfillment of this parable as they prepared for their wedding in 2020. No matter what the forces of nature hurled against them, they stayed strong because their relationship is built on solid foundations: virtues they learned from their family, an education that prepared them for jobs that make a difference in the lives of other people, and a common faith in Christ that has inspired their life decisions, their choice of friends, and their participation in public worship.

So, when people hear they got married during the pandemic of 2020, they will know the resilience of this couple. They may deduce their strength when they realize Sarah and Dennis got married on Halloween. They overcome a day known for tricks and masquerades by offering their sincere and honest commitment to each other. Good conquers evil. Even more fittingly, though, Halloween is All Hallows Eve, the night before many Christians observe All Saints Day. When we remember our heroes who built their foundations firmly upon Christ, we determine to follow their example.

Sarah and Dennis, that's our prayer for you, that the firm foundation you are establishing today will help others discover Christ in the home you are making your own. He will dwell there with you always, giving you the strength you need to overcome adversities that lie ahead, and the love you need to enjoy every day of married life.

Saturday, October 31, 2020