

BYRON HATFIELD & OLIVIA MEADOWS

Byron and Olivia, your journey to this day was not the shortest distance between two points. You've known each other since middle school. You hung around in high school. You got separated in college. But you're both from military families, so you inhabit the world, not just one city. You wanted a Catholic ceremony even before circumstances led to your civil marriage. The virus interrupted those plans. You rescheduled to a date commemorating the 2-year anniversary of that marriage. Afghanistan interrupted those plans, so you rescheduled again. You live in North Carolina, but you have family in the Kansas City area and wanted the wedding here, especially accessible for your mothers. You've celebrated Christmas together in this cathedral, so this became a beautiful destination for your wedding, first planned with a lot of family and friends present. Every wedding demands the management of details, but it seems that you faced a few more challenges than most. Finally, on a much deferred date, you have arrived from Point A to Point B. A faithful few, all people who love you intensely, are here in this cathedral that you can always call home.

Not everyone possesses the abilities for such perseverance. Love, though, is a commanding force. It enables us and pushes us to do things we may not otherwise consider possible or desirable. The first two scripture readings you've chosen celebrate the attraction of love and the embrace that true love reaches, even demanding sacrifice.

You have added to these passages the poetic opening to the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus proclaims the Beatitudes. If Genesis and First Corinthians accurately depict the joy of love, the Beatitudes show the depth of its satisfaction. It praises those who develop an inner spirit dedicated to God, a compassion for others, and a peaceful acceptance of inevitable challenges. I'm sure you've learned this in your military careers as well: If you believe strongly in some basic principles, if you work together, you can endure a lot, and you can feel satisfied. Jesus says, when you follow him, you feel more than satisfied: you feel blessed. Others may not think that blessedness comes from poverty of spirit, times of mourning, a meek disposition, or hunger and thirst. But those who think of others, improve their lives, and bring them peace—those are the ones who experience the fullness of human life.

Byron and Olivia, the Catholic Church regards this ceremony as a sacrament, one in which Christ is more present than at most other times. We believe he will remain ever present with the two of you as you raise your commitment to a higher level with loftier goals. Know of our love and admiration for you. Your perseverance has shown us what love can do, if love accompanies the distance between any two points.

Friday, April 30, 2021