

After more than a year of virtual meetings, we have a better appreciation for being in the same space on occasions like this. Jordan and Lucia got connected because of their mutual friend Sarah, who could see the future in the space inside her head. The two of them met virtually over the phone, and only later in person. The in-person meeting lasted three hours but felt like three days. Over the past year, Lucia and Jordan have worked virtually at home more than in person at the office. After all, the fields of advertising and project management require a considerable amount of time in solitude and generally transpire indoors.

Yet Jordan and Lucia have never lost their appreciation for being in the same space and going outside. Jordan even proposed on a surprise walk outdoors through Loose Park in Kansas City, and they've chosen as the first reading for us to hear today an excerpt from the biblical book called the Song of Songs. There, two lovers express the joy of leaving their solitude to enter the space of the other's presence. They each describe their partner with images from the great outdoors: a young stag leaping across the hills, a dove hidden in the clefts of the rock. Their love is stronger than a blazing fire and more vigorous than deep waters. Even today when virtual graphics create powerful images, the bible's allusions to the world of nature resonate best when it comes to love.

The Letter to the Hebrews notes the power of mutual love when people are present, and the demand to pursue it when people are absent. It says, "Be mindful of prisoners as if sharing their imprisonment, and of the ill-treated as of yourselves, for you are also in the body." It expects married couples to be faithful to each other, even when they are apart. When visitors come because they are absent from their own homes, the Letter to the Hebrews says, "Do not neglect hospitality." There is something sacred in welcoming the presence of another person.

Jordan and Lucia, you experienced the power of mutual love profoundly throughout the time of your engagement. Now as you enter the blessings of married life, you will have even more opportunities to share yourselves with your partner, to appreciate the sacredness of your physical presence to another human being. When people are apart, they can be virtually present, but they have to bring the same mutual love to those circumstances as best they can. God has created us for one another, to be with one another.

In the gospel, Jesus reminds his disciples that they have a mission. They may have thought just being in his presence was enough, but he had more in mind. He said, "You are the salt of the earth.... You are the light of the world." The two of you will especially be salt and light for any children God provides you. They will come to know the beauty of nature, the joy of love, and the virtues of hospitality because of your example.

Lucia and Jordan, we accompany you with our prayers that you will find in this day of happy physical presence the joy of human love, with which no virtual presence can compare. We also assure you what you surely already know, that God's love is never virtual. It is ever-present. It will support you, comfort you and guide you all your days. He will make your love salt and light for the world.