

Salvador Caballero & Courtney Stahl

Just two weeks ago I took a few days off and drove through a city where some of my family comes from, Redwood Falls, Minnesota, not far from where Salvador grew up in Windom. I visited the graves of my uncle and aunt, Frank and Harriet Bertrand, whose wedding anniversary was yesterday. On my way home I drove through Brookings, South Dakota, where Courtney's family comes from, and where she met Salvador. It seems only by the hand of God that a woman from Brookings found her soulmate in a man originally from Michoacán. Up to that point, Salvador had done all the relocation—from Mexico to the US and from Minnesota to South Dakota—but then Courtney relocated to Omaha, Salvador followed, and they both relocated to Kansas City. We feel blessed that your work in nursing and civil engineering has brought you here.

Anyone who moves from one place to another faces challenges to establish a new circle of friendships and to get adjusted to local customs. Most people can do it if they possess a strong moral center and enjoy the support of a partner they love.

Jesus Christ was the ultimate traveler, leaving his Father's side to dwell among us as the Word made flesh. By the time of his Last Supper, as we hear in today's gospel, he had established a circle of friends whom he really loved. He hated to leave them, but he gave this advice: "Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love... and your joy [will] be complete." They would be lost without him, but they would find their way if they only had love.

Some decades after Jesus died, someone wrote the Letter to the Hebrews, which supplies our second reading. The Christian community still kept Jesus' commandments and prized the value of love. Today's passage says, "Let mutual love continue." Then it gives several examples. The first is, "Do not neglect hospitality." Salvador and Courtney, you have both benefited from the hospitality of others. In relocating to new cities, you put yourselves at the mercy of strangers, and people received you, fed you, taught you, coached you, housed you, and hired you. You wouldn't be successful today without the hospitality of others. This scripture passage on your wedding day reminds you to show hospitality in turn. The Letter to the Hebrews continues with its most sublime example of mutual love: "Let marriage be honored among all and the marriage bed be kept undefiled." Jesus had asked his disciples to love one another, but the love of marriage is also to be honored because it involves a faithful and unique commitment. To those worried about their financial future, the Letter to the Hebrews says, "Let your life be free from love of money but be content with what you have, for [God] has said, I will never forsake you or abandon you." You have no need to be afraid.

Courtney and Salvador, today you settle into a new life with a stronger relationship between yourselves and with God. This day will fill you with the grace you need to show mutual love, generous hospitality, proper values, and fearless faith—all because you keep the commandments of Christ and remain in his love.

Saturday, August 21, 2021