

It's only fitting that a Catholic couple who got engaged while skydiving are having their wedding on the feast of the Ascension of Jesus. Mike and Cassie met each other in college. When they first contacted the cathedral about their wedding, the pandemic had just begun. I was in Australia. I cut my trip short, and since no one understood much about the virus, my colleagues here asked me to quarantine for two weeks when I got back to Kansas City. Another member of our staff met with Mike and Cassie. Eventually they postponed the wedding until people could get together. I got to meet them in person just a few months ago. And, finally, here we all are. In the meantime they have been using their skills in sports medicine and law enforcement to make the world a healthier, happier, and safer place. As a married couple, they'll do even more.

In many parts of the world Christians celebrate the Ascension on a Thursday, exactly 40 days after Easter, because of testimony in the passage from Acts of the Apostles that we heard as our first reading today. However, because the day is so significant not just for Jesus, but for us, most of the dioceses in the United States and many conferences of bishops around the world move it to a Sunday so that more people can celebrate it together. The completion of Jesus' ministry came with a promise to send the Holy Spirit, whose coming we celebrate next Sunday on Pentecost, in keeping with testimony from the bible.

One of the analogies the bible gives us about marriage is that Christ loves the Church as a groom loves a bride. You find in any wedding, then, a symbol of the love of Jesus, who was willing to die that we might have life. On Ascension Day, we celebrate the connection between this divine groom and bride. Jesus Christ, our head, attains eternal glory where we, his body, hope to follow. Our feet usually take us where we want to go, but on the Ascension, our head leads the way; Jesus is the head of his body the Church.

If you want the glorious experience of skydiving, there's only one way to get it. You have to ascend. You have to go on high in order to tell about the experience down below. People can then vicariously ascend with you. Jesus ascended above and sent the Holy Spirit below that we might join him above even now.

This wedding day is the ascent that Mike and Cassie have yearned for all their lives. They have experienced the heights of love, which they profess today. They have experienced the heights of faith, which draws them to this cathedral.

As the Holy Spirit bestowed spiritual gifts on us after the ascension of Jesus, so Mike and Cassie will bestow gifts of love on us after this wedding. As the disciples bore witness to their faith in Christ, so this couple bears witness to his love.

Mike and Cassie, you found each other because God placed within you the gift of love. Now, as a couple you will share that love with others. We praise God for calling you to this day and assure you of our prayers. May you find union with each other and with Christ, who calls you to a life of love, ever ascending with him on high.