

Kaleb Wersland & Taylor Kemp

Kaleb, Taylor and I had our first conversation last year not in person but on a videoconference—and not because of the pandemic but because Kaleb was in Spokane for Isaac’s wedding at the cathedral there. Our cathedral is happy to welcome all of you to this celebration.

Technology has made it possible for us to be in touch with people without being in the presence of people, but we all appreciate how powerful it is to see each other face to face, to put our bodies in the presence of other bodies.

Both Kaleb and Taylor have pursued career paths that improve the human body, whether training for better health or restoring former health. They both realize that a great way to help other people is to help the body that they inhabit. Then when those bodies come together, whether to play baseball or get married, wonderful results come about.

The scripture readings that Taylor and Kaleb have asked us to hear today reinforce this significance of the human body. In Mark’s gospel Jesus refers to the passage from Genesis we heard in the first reading. These accounts show how the very creation of man and woman foreshadows their union. In fact, according to this passage of Genesis, God formed the woman directly from the body of the man. This is how the ancients conceived the original pull for bodily union, a kind of return to a primordial unified being.

In his Letter to the Romans, Saint Paul wrote about the human body. He wanted his readers to use their body for another noble purpose: “I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship.” Paul came from a religious tradition familiar with offering grain and animal sacrifices to God. Now in Christ, Paul wanted believers to offer something more: their own bodies. Paul himself had undergone many physical hardships to proclaim the gospel. As anyone knows from exercising the body, the only way to advance is to accept momentary discomfort. The body will respond favorably.

Paul offers more advice to the Romans: “be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern the will of God.” “Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor.... exercise hospitality.” When we hear these verses at a wedding, we easily apply them to the sincere and noble love shared by husband and wife. A couple discerns God’s will before entering marriage. They love with sincerity and mutual affection. They anticipate the other in showing honor, and together they show hospitality. Even though Paul summons everyone who reads his letter to use their bodies to pursue these virtues, they are important in family life above all.

Kaleb and Taylor, God has especially equipped you to follow Paul’s vision. You show love for each other and for the people you serve. You anticipate each other in showing honor, and you anticipate the needs of those you help. As you begin married life together, God will continue to guide you. You will give God honor by offering your bodies, your lives as a living sacrifice to him, and by encouraging others to do the same.

Saturday, July 16, 2022