

## Whit Throckmorton & Mary Kate Workman

Mary Kate and Whit have been seeing each other since they met at Ole Miss something like seven years ago. Two of the main reasons we've waited so long for this wedding were unrelated but equally disruptive: one was the pandemic; the other was law school. The human brain can only manage so much at a time. Wedding planning requires a head cleared of many other concerns. Today the day has come when the world has entered a healthier stage, when law school has become a memory, and when our attention can be focused on the meaning of this marriage.

The bible traces the meaning of marriage all the way back to its first book. God could see from the beginning that the human he made would benefit from intimate companionship. God, the first surgeon, opened the side of the man, withdrew a rib, carefully resealed the man's side with flesh, and built the rib into a woman. The unity of the two can be heard in the man's eloquent words beholding his new partner, "This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." Their spiritual unity comes from their original unity.

That unity expresses itself in love, the natural fruit of being human. For this reason Jesus made love the point of his two greatest commandments. When he asked the Pharisee to love God and love neighbor, Jesus was commanding nothing more than what humans were made to do. We think of commands as orders given to us when we do not wish to obey, and sometimes they are. But the best commands are those that give us purpose and direction. They come from people who know us, know our potential for good and for ill, and who guide us on the proper path. Good commands lead to happiness. We've all experienced this from parents and teachers who made us do something we might not have felt like doing, but we became happier people as a result. We all sin; we all veer away from God and our neighbor to pursue our own pleasures. So Jesus gave us the commands we need: Love, just love God, love your neighbor. You'll be amazed how happy you become.

Whit and Mary Kate, the most important goals in life demand attention: finishing school, getting a job, managing a pandemic, and preparing a wedding. Other important goals lie ahead. They will also demand attention, and they will cause stress. Your love for each other has brought you great happiness and peace. As you reach for new goals, love will help you achieve them. Saint Paul expressed this beautifully to the Christians in Philippi. In today's second reading, he promised this recipe for finding peace amid stress: "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about those things.... Then the God of peace will be with you."

We pray that the joy of this day may remain with you forever, and that it may increase from day to day. Any of us can increase our joy if we follow the advice from St. Paul. When something demands attention, stay focused. "The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all," St. Paul says. "Make your requests known to God." Then, while following the two great commands of Jesus, follow also this great command of Paul: "Rejoice!" The Lord is near to you, even if your dreams take seven years to come true.

Saturday, July 30, 2022