

## Jake Konnesky and Maddie Sanders

**Maddie and Jake, your story is about long and short distances. As you got to know each other, you drew so close that you dwelled inside each other's heart. But physically you spent most of your relationship remote. You found ways to share your lives and your love from two different States. Throughout those years you encouraged each other to accomplish your goals—finishing an education and landing good jobs in engineering and law. You then got reunited in the same city—and I say reunited because as kids you lived five minutes away from each other. Friendship was right there for the taking, but you never met in those early years of your life. This counterpoint between long and short distances even showed up in Jake's proposal. For this intimate moment between two people, Jake chose a spot where you could see a vast city sprawling beneath you, yet made of tiny neighborhoods where people live within five minutes of each other.**

**Many people in the Catholic Church refer to marriage as a vocation, a call from God to live a certain way. In your case, you can sense the patience of God who called you from childhood, placing you within families who could nurture your love for faith, friendship, and for making the world a better place through your education and your work. Now after all this time God has called you back into a neighborhood where you may build a home and a family of your own. As your past was characterized by time apart from each other, your future—finally—is together as one.**

**For the scripture readings of their wedding Mass, Jake and Maddie chose the first one from the first chapter of the first book of the bible, which envisions the creation of the world. In this telling, God had created the earth, water, the sun, the moon, the stars, plants and animals as a kind of warmup for his biggest act of creation. As Genesis tells it, "God created man in his image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." God immediately gave two orders to human beings: "Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth." And "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth." God created human beings to partner with him over the expansion of creation and its management. God calls each of us to these responsibilities, but he entrusts them especially into the hands of married couples. God placed within us a longing for companionship, the enjoyment of friendship, the ability to supervise, and the willingness to sacrifice. God gives each of us responsibilities, but he also gives us the best tool to enact them: the gift of love.**

**Maddie and Jake, as you step into the first chapter of the first book of your married life, you enter the world as two who are one. You ask us to think of you not as mere individuals but as a couple. You have witnessed love in your own families and friends; they have taught you how to use the gift God gives you today. Your love for each other will contribute to your joy and strengthen you for any challenges ahead. You have already traveled a great distance to get here. You will continue to contribute to the vast areas of family, church and society because love will keep you close.**